

NO MOTHER



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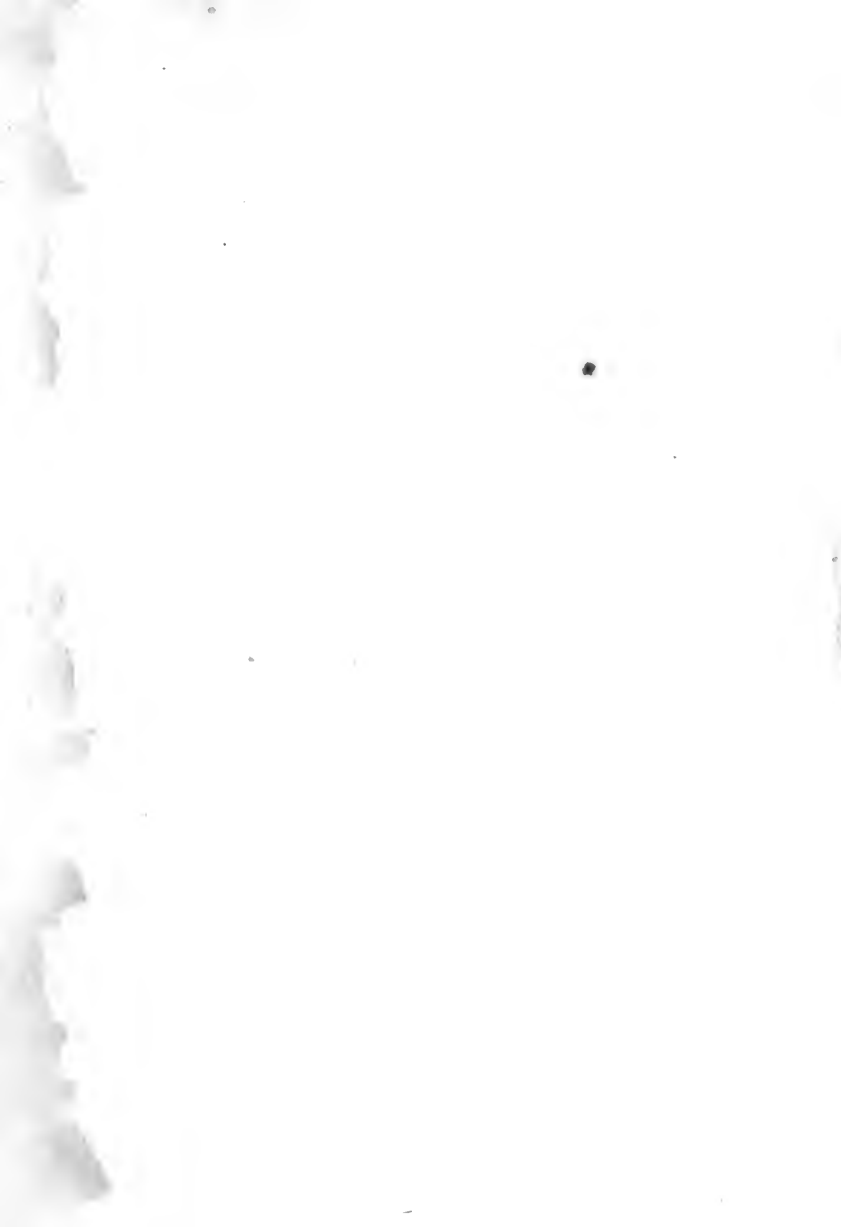
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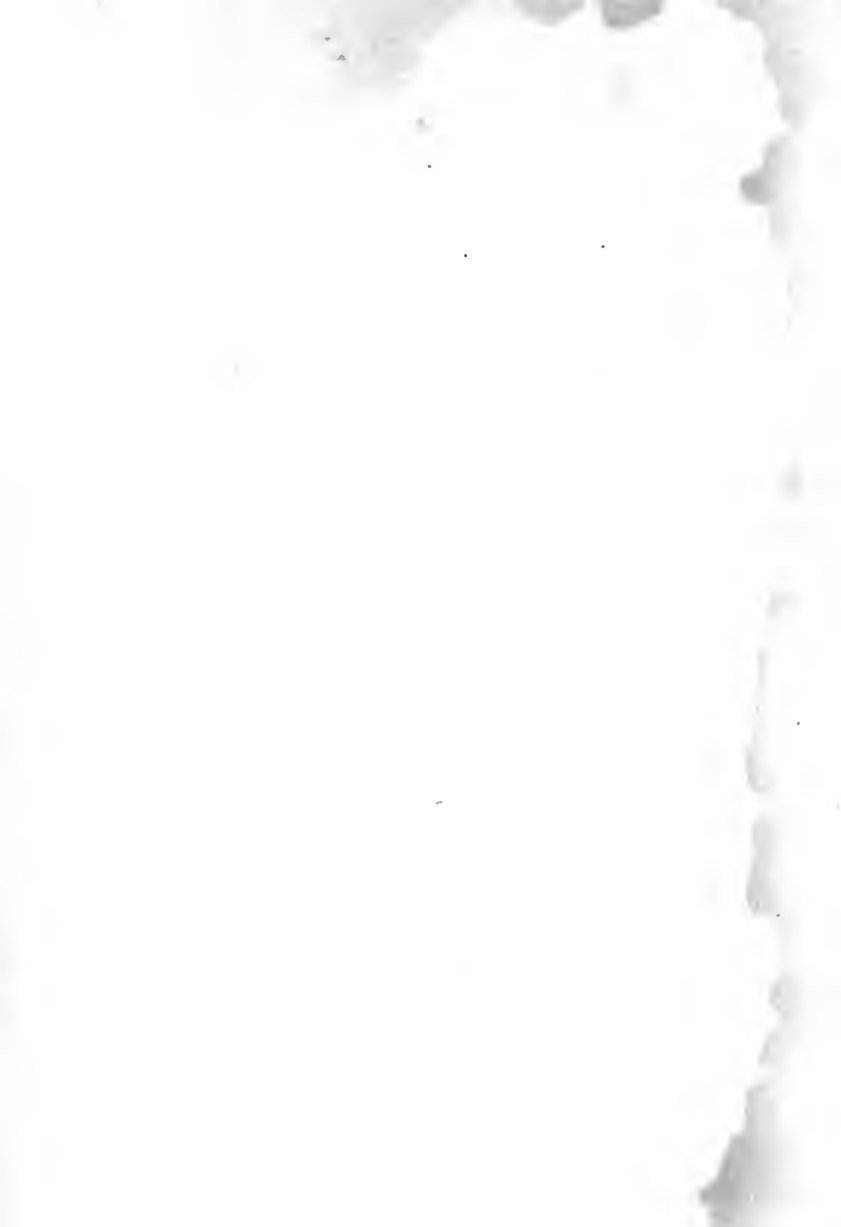
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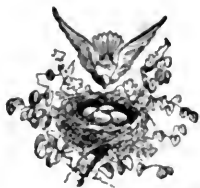




"O, Dolly! it's our side of Factories."

Like Mother Like Mine.

BY AUTHOR OF "OPPOSITE THE JAIL."



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IRA BRADLEY & CO.
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NO MOTHER LIKE MINE.

CHAPTER I.

DOLLY'S NARRATIVE.

"Light and bright the vision plays."

DES, dear," said my mother, as we sat down to rest for a few moments before getting supper, "I think there is such a thing as living beyond our present experiences, of resting at all times in a higher and purer atmosphere."

"But these little, daily cares are so depressing," I said.

"They should not be," she answered, with her sweet smile. "Bread making, cake baking, sweeping and dusting are not so unpleasant in themselves; there are even poetry and beauty in each, if we will it to be. And then, you know, our thoughts are not in our fingers."

"Yours are not, at any rate," I replied, as I tied on my working apron, "for sometimes when it seems to me you ought to be worried to death, you can smile and sing, too. Even when Harry was brought in for dead, you acted as if you had been prepared for it in some strange manner."

"I had been prepared," said mother, "but not in any strange manner."

"Pray how?" I asked, with wide, opened eyes.

"By faith," was the simple answer.

I had no time to ponder on the ready reply, or the quiet, beautiful smile with which she said it, for Dick, my youngest brother, a sturdy, wholesome boy, came rushing in from an errand he had been sent on to the Post Office.

"I tell you what, Dolly, it's a long walk from there," he said. "I wish I had a velocipede like the rest of the fellows. I can get a splendid one, second-hand, at Benson's, all in good condition, for five dollars—just think of that! Never shall have such a chance again—but what's the use? I've not got five dollars, nor one—nor yet fifty cents."

"Oh, well!" said I, my thoughts running on another subject, "you must have faith."

"Faith!" he answered, lightly, "I'd rather have money. Faith don't buy velocipedes, I guess. It's proper place is in the pulpit, not in the house."

"Never mind! try it a little," I said, laughing, "if it don't come to anything, why nobody is hurt."

"All right! then I'm going to have a velocipede, slap up!—and some supper, too, I hope. You haven't even set the table."

"No! I'm going to get a clean cloth," and out I ran into the hall, feeling unusually light-hearted. Up the white stairs I went, singing, for all our home surroundings were peculiarly pleasant. The view from the window at the top of the stairs detained me a moment, but presently I went into the bright, pretty bed-room, where in a very high and delightfully roomy old press, that had come down to the seventh generation, was packed our store of house linen.

After I had selected the cloth, I thought I would freshen my toilet a little with a clean collar, and so I stood at the glass long enough to smarten myself up. I had brushed my hair, and was just closing the drawer, when accidentally I

knocked the cover from a little box in which I kept ribbons. In the corner of that box placidly staring up at me, was a five dollar bill, my own. I had been saving it for a long time, and intended to buy some pretty laces and little matters for toilet purposes. But the sight of the money set me to thinking again. It would be so nice for Dick to have a velocipede, and he was such a good boy, seldom grumbling when set to tasks, and always willing to help us all.

But then I really needed the new ribbons, and five dollars did seem such a deal of money. The velocipede would be of no benefit to me—it would simply please Dick—please him! why the boy would be wild with delight. Somehow the idea of his confidently expressed faith, had taken hold of me. He might forget it, but the lesson would be all the same.

“Where one can be a sort of providence,” I thought to myself, “and grant a wish so reasonable,” and then I thought of Dick’s honest, blue eyes, with the wonder-joy in them, and of the possible lesson I might teach, though I needed lessons myself heaven knows! Without having quite made up my mind, I snatched up the bill,

thrust it in my pocket, and went down stairs. Dick had apparently forgotten about the velocipede, and was putting some pine sticks on the fire to make the kettle boil, and father sat in his easy chair, busy with the paper.

It was not long before the table was ready, and mother was in her place pouring out the tea. It seemed as if every little thing set me to thinking. Father's care-worn face, and the manner mother seemed to study him. Even the way she handed him his tea, was something different from the ways of other people, and from my own. It was a sort of caressing movement, and her sweet eyes, though anxious, had a smile in them. My father must have noticed it, for he did not often say "thank you, dear," as he did to-night.

"What a good mother she is!" I thought, "after this trying day. From morning till night she has been on her feet." Harry — that was my eldest brother, bedridden — had been restless and full of pain, and it had taxed all her energies to amuse him. Our only servant was very young and a little silly, and consequently some part of the work that should have been hers, fell on mother's shoulders, or mine, and yet, my mother

was just as quiet, gentle, low-voiced and smiling, as when early in the morning, we made the bread together.

“By faith!”

I seemed to see the words written on her forehead, the calm, wide, beautiful forehead, and the tears came to my eyes for a moment. How much had she sacrificed, daily, for us! Could I not also sacrifice for others — my own?

My resolution was taken, and I determined to act upon it, at once. I was going down to the store for some groceries, for it devolved upon me to regulate the home supply. I remembered having seen the last time I was there, that pretty, blue velocipede, and I was now all impatience to make the purchase.

As I left our door, neighbor Brock and his wife, and Cathy, their pretty, bright-faced daughter, were just coming in, as they did generally once a week.

Cathy had her violin case in her hand, and her father carried his flute, a dainty thing, all silver and pearl.

“I’m so glad to see you!” I said, kissing Cathy. “Go right in, I shall be back in a little

while. Father and mother will be so delighted; and as for Harry, you know music is heaven to him."

Then I ran all the way to the store, and found the velocipede yet for sale. Benson, the shop-keeper, took it down to show me.

"It's for a poor widow, whose son is gone to a place," he said, "and she needs the money very much, I reckon. I don't charge for selling it."

"I'll take it, Mr. Benson," said I. "Send it down early in the morning."

Then it seemed, going home, as if I had two hearts in my bosom, Dick's and my own, and both of them beating joyfully and gratefully.





CHAPTER II.

THE MILLS ON FIRE.

“Serene and calm the world of song.”

THE house-room looked more charming than ever as I entered it, after returning from my errand. Mrs. Brock sat at the piano, her fair hair hanging in clustering curls from the comb that partly confined it, striking now and then a soft musical chord. Cathy was tuning the sweet, little violin, which she handles almost with the grace and finish of a master, and her father had his silver flute, poised, ready to begin.

The Brocks were our right hand neighbors, and sincere friends as well as lovers of art. They had come among us in great trouble, some three years before, and having a sick child, my mother was moved to go in and offer her services. She found them almost destitute and despairing. The father, a slender, good looking man, had been

in the service of a city firm, as book-keeper, for years, but the failure of his employers threw him on the world, penniless. A friend had loaned him a small sum of money, and with this he had moved to our town, hoping to get a place in one of the factories that lined our river banks. The little child died, and they still had no friend or comforter beside my mother, who enlisted the sympathies of the town's folk, and the child was decently buried.

“Ach!” the mother would sometimes say to me, with a strong German accent, “thy *mutter* is an angel! I love the very sight of her. Before we came here, we sold my poor, little piano, that mine father gave me, twenty years ago, on my marriage day; Wilhelm had pawned his flute, which was also a wedding present, and poor Cathy's little violin, which came down from the great, great grandfather, and which she loves so dearly as her life. Now, because of thy *mutter*, we are comfortable, and though I have not my piano, the father has his flute again, with which he keeps off the heart-sickness, and Cathy has her violin. We have found such friends, that I am thankful to the good God, and it is thy *mutter*

has taught me this. My Wilhelm, poor man, has not faith, but some time, please heaven, he shall believe, and be happy while he lives and when he dies."

The Brocks had brought in a roll of old German music. Blessed be Germany for her almost divine masters of song, whose harmonies float in the atmosphere of far distant lands, and whose numbers wedded to undying music, are sung throughout the civilized world!

Harry's door was open, and the light of our house-room streamed over the threshold, to meet the faint rays of the tiny taper, placed on the stand near his bed. I knew he was happy, for music always soothed his restlessness.

Can I not make this picture perfect for you — this picture of the Brock family, whose destiny heaven has seemingly decreed shall be woven with our lives? There stands Wilhelm, slender, swaying, his long, white, nervous fingers flying over the silver keys, his eyes, under over-arching, black brows, of a blue so dark, as to seem black in the night. His hair is luxuriant, and inclined to curl back from the low, broad, thought-lined brow. His features are strongly defined, and

rather handsomely formed, his expression bright and hopeful, though varying. He looks a resolute, gentle tempered man—he is a good German scholar, something of a poet, but above all, a musician. Under book-keeper in the factory of which father is foreman, he is an able and earnest worker, and hopes in time to lay up some money, which, with the savings of his son Ernest, who is in business for himself in some small way, will enable him to buy the house which they now rent.

His wife is a small woman, quick in her movements, decided in her opinions, and who seems to be without fault, unless it be the almost worshipful love she bears her husband and children, and which makes her too tolerant even towards their failings. She is not pretty, but her face is full of character, and her hair like rippling gold. Full forty years of age, she is yet more like Cathy's sister, both in manner and appearance, than her mother. Like her husband, she is passionately fond of music, and I have the happiness of being one of her pupils, though she often tells me that I need the aid of more advanced masters. But we often find a little

time for music, during the day. Those are the hours during which mother and I can with impunity absent ourselves from Harry's bedside. Harry is a pale, handsome lad of nineteen, whose life since his tenth year, has been a long succession of agonies, though now he seems better in body and mind. Ever since he was brought in for dead on that terrible day, he has been a constant though a precious care.

Cathy Brock, is like her father, bright, merry and winning. Her face is rather broad, so are her shoulders, her whole cast of countenance tells of her German origin, and she is a very pretty girl. Frank, amiable and earnest, she intends to find her place in life, and hold it. At present, she is a hard student, and her greatest sorrow is that her brother Ernst, whom I have never seen, has not been able to go back to Germany, and finish his college course. Of this she will talk to me by the hour, and I confess she has quite imbued me with her opinions.

Mother sat near the fire with her stocking basket, darning needle in hand. The fire flame played on her face, lighting up its serene beauty—it must have been exquisite in youth—and I,

as I turned over the leaves of the old German music, fancied that its sweetness of sound, was akin to her purity of expression, and someway the two seemed blended.

"I'll take my breath, now," said Mr. Brock, and placing his flute on the piano, he drew a chair near my father, and began talking business. Mrs. Brock naturally seated herself by mother, and Cathy and I paired off, after the beloved violin had been carefully secured.

"I had a letter from Ernst, to-day," said Cathy—she always used the shorter, German pronunciation.

"Indeed! he is getting on, I hope," said I.

"Yes. I think Ernst is sure to get on, he is so steady and persevering. He always said he would be rich. It is the height of his ambition, and I believe he will."

"It must be so delightful to be rich," I said, with something like a sigh.

"Yes, if only you can make your own fortune," responded Cathy, with brightening eyes. "To feel that you are something more than a humdrum working machine, to know that you can command the attention and applause of the world."

"That sounds very much as if you contemplated making music a profession," I said.

"I should like to,"—and her eyes kindled. "But then I am not a genius. I shall have to work hard, I can't say how long, before I shall dare to play in public."

"And I years before I am fit to play anywhere," I said, laughing.

"I thought you only cared for home and housekeeping," said Cathy, who was folding a bit of white paper round and round her finger.

"I do care for home, and housekeeping, particularly under mother's supervision, for she seems to make everything and everybody fall into the right place," I said in my quick way, "but the fact is I am thirsting and hungering for an education. Ever since I came from school, I have been unhappy, though I don't let mother know how I feel. But she guesses it, and tries to cheer me in her own sweet way. I suppose I ought to be content, for you see there is no hope, the way I look at it. Father's salary is not large, and a great part of it goes in doctor's bills and medicines for poor Harry, so it would be cruel for me to complain."

"You have such a neat, beautiful home!" said Cathy, "we can be neat at our house, but we can't be beautiful. There must be fairies concealed in your fingers, over here, for all your pretty things are home made. How do you manage? Those brush bags, for instance, they are prettier than you can buy, and yet you make them."

"Yes, out of pieces of Turkey red, and black cotton velvet. That sofa-cover, with the black vines and leaves, is composed of the same material; it costs little but the time, and I cut out all sorts of fanciful figures when I am sitting by Harry. It amuses him, and he has made some very pretty designs for me. The only drawback is that he is all the time calling me to admire them, as fast as he gets new ones. We *must* answer his bell, you know, and sometimes I have to go with my hands in the dough. Still I am thankful for anything that keeps him from fretting, poor boy, or that makes him forget his pain."

"How pretty your mother looks, Dolly!"

Dolly is my home name, and is, as it ought to be, homely.

"It always seems to me as if she were thinking the most beautiful thoughts."

"I dare say she is, Cathy; her life is by no means as common-place as it seems. You should hear her talk when we sit down to rest sometimes. I am getting to feel quite ashamed to complain, for she makes everything seem just as it should, and her faith is something wonderful. I don't believe any misfortune could take her by surprise — she would only say, 'I know in whom I trust.'"

"It seems to me," said my father, "there's a great noise outside." He had turned, listening, to the window. Mr. Brock rose and sauntered across the room. Suddenly we were all startled by a thundering knock.

"Mr. Gregory! the mill be on fire!" shouted a voice we knew well.

My father sprang to his feet, growing pale. It was but the work of a minute to don his great coat, his thick cap, and he was off. Mr. Brock worked more quietly. He first put his flute in its case. Then he kissed his wife and daughter, to their seeming surprise, bade his wife stay where she was, and went into his own house for

his overcoat, leaving us all at the window, looking out upon the fast reddening atmosphere. I was trembling with excitement.

"Oh, mother! if it should be father's mill!" I said.

"Well, if it is father's mill, as you call it, worrying won't save it, dear," said my mother, quietly.

Dick called down if he might get up. "It's just as light as day," he added, "and I'm wide awake." He must also have been dressed, for when mother said yes, down he came prepared to make a night of it, and looking eagerly to where his rough coat hung inside the closet door on a peg. Mother sent him for water, and began to make coffee.

"They'll be cold and tired when they get home," she said, "and nothing so heartens one as good coffee."

"I wonder," said Mrs. Brock, turning to my mother, "that you can be so calm. See, I tremble from head to foot. The prospect of Wilhelm's losing his place, and certainly the fire is on this side, fills me with terror. We have seen so many troubles."

"And have you not been carried through them all?" asked mother, quietly.

The little woman paused for a moment, as if grasping a new idea.

"Why — yes;" she said, slowly.

"Then never doubt but you will be carried through this, if indeed there is a trial in reserve for you. Don't lose your faith in God."

"But if Wilhelm loses his place!"

"Wait," said mother; "trouble comes fast enough. Don't anticipate."

"Mother! Cathy and I are going up Gates' hill," said I.

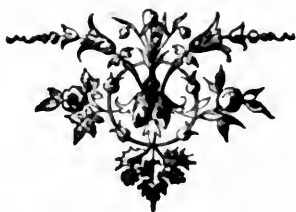
"I don't know, dear," said mother, pausing, coffee-pot in hand, "the roughest part of the town will be out to-night."

"But they won't go to the hill, only the women and children. They'll go to the fire."

"I'll take care of 'em," said Dick, starting up. It was just the thing he wanted. "I'm up to Cathy's shoulder," he added, casting an admiring glance in her pretty face, "and I can protect them."

"Well, go along," said mother, smiling, — "coming Harry!" she added, as a plaintive voice

sounded from the depths of the room beyond, and as we stepped over the threshold, she vanished into the other room, and Mrs. Brock took her place by the fire with a sad countenance.





CHAPTER III.

SOMEBODY HURT.

"Of man the tenant of a world of woe."

IT made me feel odd when father kissed me ;
queer isn't it ?" queried Cathy.

"What ! the odd feeling, or the kiss ?" I
asked.

"The kiss, of course. Papa never kisses me unless he is going away, and I never saw him kiss my mother in my life, though any one can see how fond of her he is, and of me too."

"Yes, any one can see that," I said with a nervous creeping through my veins, for I am rather susceptible to what is called superstitious fear. I have been trying all my life, with mother's help, to break myself of all such follies, and as

she never laughs at, but rather pities me, I think in time I shall succeed.

We reached the top of the hill which was not very high, and there the murky reds and yellows with which the atmosphere had been filled, culminated in stately flames, whose tongues of fire seemed to touch the sky. All the horizon blazed in lurid gold, so intense was the light of the burning factories. The hoarse shouts of the firemen and the sharper cry of boys, wild at the sight, and heedless of destruction; came up in the night air to where we two girls stood, with a Babel like indistinctness.

At the first look a dizzy, sick feeling, came over me.

“O Dolly, it’s our side of factories!” said Cathy, with a wail in her voice, “and they’ll all go.”

Even at that moment, my terror and anguish were merged in the supreme wonder of what mother would say to that? Here was something very near ruin falling with every shower of red hot sparks on the heads of more than half of a community. The people down there lived by the mills. There were swarms of mill-hands now

quite visible as they poured out of their small red cottages, over the green, by the banks of the river. Men were hurrying up from the towing path on the other side, where the canal ran sluggishly. The two bells from their respective church and court-house towers, were swinging more rapidly than they had swung for years.

"I say, Dolly, that's bad for us," said Dick, who had run a little ahead, but was now back, quite honest in his intention to guard the charge entrusted to his care.

"I'm afraid it is;" I said.

"I guess velocipede faith will go for nothing this year;" he added, quietly, thrusting his hands deep in his pockets. "If the mills all burn down, you know—" and he rushed forward as a fiercer glare proved that the fire was by no means under control.

"Velocipede faith!" it was an odd combination of words, but it showed that the boy had remembered and was in earnest.

And now the great walls seemed to totter, and the fire ran from roof to roof, and then there was one awful crash, and we all sprang forward. My father's name was on my lips, and Cathy caught

me round the waist and hid her face on my shoulder.

"If somebody should have been buried under those awful walls!" she sobbed.

"Let us hope that they were warned in time," I said. "I'm sure they must have seen."

"I tell you that's a big sight!" said Dick, coming into line again. "I'd like to be over there. S'poze I make a dash — nobody 'll hurt you, and there are lots of people coming."

Yes, there were lots of people coming. The housekeeper from Garcelon house — Mr. Garcelon was the owner of the mills, but he was very seldom at home — and a lame cousin who lived there, on sufferance, I suppose. Then came the red feathers of Sally Berg, fluttering over her wide brimmed hat. She was doctor Berg's maiden sister. Following her was the hook-nosed doctor himself, in his venerable white castor, his green goggles shining like globes of purple fire, in the crimson light. Slowly they came on, all the Glintwood people, even to the tinner's wife, who was hump-backed and rheumatic, besides, and an odd looking group soon stood on the gentle slope of Glintwood's only hill, making their several comments .

upon the fiery spectacle that had brought them from their different homes.

Dick was looking in my face expectant. I could not bear to disappoint the boy, for though I knew that disaster must come to us as well as poorer folk, yet the exciting scenes before us thrilled me with a wild, admiring eestacy.

"Just go down as far as the line, but don't go any further, Dick," I said to him.

"Not a step," he answered.

"I'm going there, my boy," said doctor Berg, whose red green goggles in that particular angle, looked distressingly frightful. "I thought I perceived — that is, I thought I heard — that is —" And trudging on, Dick followed him.

Now doctor Berg was never in the whole course of his life, known to finish a sentence, save with the cabalistic words, "that is."

"He is more feverish this morning, his pulse is high, that is —" And here the little doctor would stop with a mysterious air, and leave the unspoken words to be imagined.

"What did he mean?" queried Cathy, still clinging to me, while surging through and above the flames, the dense black smoke rose up in

mighty columns, and the shouts and cheers were renewed as the fact became apparent that the fire was under control.

Not long after that Dick came dashing back again.

"I tell you it's ever so much jollier down there, than here," he said. "But somebody's hurt."

Cathy held my hand more tightly; her fingers were like ice.

"Who? Did they say who?" she asked, with wild eyes.

"No. But there was somebody in the mill, one of the watchmen I believe, who went up stairs for something, and before he could get out the walls fell."

"O!" The girl drew a deep breath. "Did you see father there, anywhere?"

"I thought I did, once; I saw my father as busy as a bee. He was helping the firemen."

"And where is doctor Berg?"

"They called him over to the other side to see to the man who was hurt. They've got the fire all under—hurrah! but I tell you what, it's a big loss."

The people now began to lose their interest, for

there was no moon, the wind blew chill from the east, and the flat, low grounds beyond faded into darkness, that was only enlivened now and then by a dull burst of light, that showed men and boys dispersing in all directions. Miss Berg came up to us.

"I hope there has been no accident," she said unquietly. "I thought when the doctor went—" and here she stopped with a questioning glance, for I suppose she shared her brother's failing.

"There was a man hurt," said Dick.

"O, then I'll stay till he comes—though I didn't know. Are you going directly? everybody seems to be going. If you are—"

"We are going now;" I said, "and Dick will see you home."

Dick gave me a dissenting nudge which I did not heed.

"O, thank you; I'm not very timid, but then—" and her voice died into silence.

Back again in the pleasant living room, to which the delicious aroma of the coffee gave us a fragrant welcome; mother stopped in her rounds to listen to the news.

"It's our factory—that is it's our side of

factories. They are all gone — and where is mother?" asked Cathy.

"She would go home for some reason. I think you had better stay and eat something," mother said. "Probably your father will come home with my William; then we can send for the mother."

"Thank you," said Cathy, pulling off her hat — then instantly putting it on again, "I think I'll go home a minute, and if mother will come we'll be in together."

Mother still went on with her preparations, though very quietly. She placed the great coffee pot on a hot slab, and cut some bread into thin, toothsome slices, some of which she toasted. I busied myself with putting away my things, shutting the piano, and placing chairs at the table, my mind in a sort of chaotic state, as I wondered vaguely what mother would think about it.

"Isn't it dreadful?" I ventured to say, standing near the fire, my arm on the back of father's chair.

"Yes, when one thinks of the many poor people thrown out of work. It seems such a pity for so much property to be lost — but then there is no

help for it. One can only trust the Lord, at such a time."

"What will father do?"

"Let us wait and see. Willing hands are not generally empty."

"Then you don't feel a bit bad?" I said, wondering.

"I feel badly for the owner, and the working-men, but then I am not going to worry over it. I should only be doing myself an injury, and doubting my Maker, and most certainly all my grief and dismay would not rebuild the factories."

Just at that moment a shrill scream rang out on the night air.

"What was that?" asked mother, looking up, her cheeks bloodless.

Dick burst in as white as a ghost.

"It was Mr. Brock was crushed — almost to death. I just saw him, and doctor says he'll die."

This he said, taking pause now and then to breathe, for he had been running hard.

"Where is your father?" mother asked breathlessly.

"He's in there, with 'em; he's all right — and that's poor Mrs. Brock, screaming so. I don't wonder."

“O mother, don’t go ;” I cried, clinging to her, for she had thrown off her wide apron.

“I must, child ! The poor soul ! all alone with her trouble ! Keep the fire up, and everything warm. I may send in for something presently.”

In all sudden calamities, little can be done save to suffer. To those who have the blessed power to forget themselves, the privilege of consolation is given, but many, and I am among them, shrink from all sights and sounds of distress. I could only think of that woful time, which perhaps helped to make me what I am, when poor Harry was brought in for dead, and I ran screaming out of the house. They found me two miles away in the woods, still sobbing in uncontrollable agony.

“Dolly ! Dolly !” called Harry, “where is mother gone ?”

He had waked from an uneasy slumber, he said, and with that subtle sense which seems to be the natural heritage of the long suffering, missed the presence that was so indispensable to his happiness.

“Into the Brock’s for a few moments ; there has been a fire, and Mr. Brock got hurt. Can’t you spare her a little while ?”

"I suppose I must," he said. "Did you go to the fire?"

I described what I had seen, and he lay looking at me with his great bright eyes.

"Then father will be out of work, again. Why did God let me become so helpless?"

"Harry!" I exclaimed in dismay. I had never heard him speak like this before.

"How can you know what it is, to be the eldest of the family, just at an age when I ought to take hold and help lift the burden, and yet so helpless! so helpless!"

"O Harry!" I cried nervously, "I wish mother was here;" and overcome by excitement and pity, I burst into tears, laying my head on his pillow to sob. Then I felt his poor hot hand on my forehead.

"Never mind, never mind," he said, soothingly, "I can tell you what mother would say — only just, 'it's God's will,' — and so it is, and I can realize it when I am trying to be patient. Mother believes all she tells us; she almost sees God, don't you think? Even when I am in the most pain, she has a way of soothing me, just by what she says, and the way she says it. I don't dare

to think what I should do without her, for she often brings heaven to me, so that the door seems just within reach. It's not for myself, don't you see. I could, at least it seems as if I could, bear my own helplessness, if only I were not a burden to others, and sometimes such a miserable burden."

It seemed to ease the aching at my heart, to hear him talk in that way, and I lifted my head, wiping my eyes. At that moment, the bell rang.





CHAPTER IV.

WHAT MOTHER SAID.

"Hope in glad fruition ends."

A TALL hulking lad stood in the door way.

"It's Shucks!" said Phil, who answered the bell; "shall I let him in?"

"What does he want?" I asked, naturally.

"Please I saw the light in here and it looked good;" said the boy. "I be out of a home."

"O well, you must go somewhere else," said Phil. "We can't take you in, can we, Dolly?"

"Shucks, is that you? go in out of the dark;" said mother's sweet voice; and the lad came shivering in, mother behind him.

Always uncouth, there was something of the horrible mingled with his grotesqueness, as he entered. He was apparently wet to the skin, and

his face was so covered with dirt and soot that it was hard to imagine it had ever been white. Shucks had a high nose, a wide mouth, small, sparkling black eyes, and hair that looked as if it had never been touched by the comb. This, added to a downcast manner and a restless movement of the right shoulder, which was habitual with him, gave him a still more uncanny demeanor, and it made me shudder to see mother touch his shifting right shoulder, as she said, "Why Bony" — for his whole name was Bonaparte Shucks — "you look as if a little cleaning would do you more good than anything else, just now. Come out here;" and she led him to the kitchen, and left him there busy with soap and water.

"When is father coming in?" I ventured to ask.

"Directly;" she answered, moving round quietly.

"And — will *he* die?"

"We cannot tell; he is in God's hands. The doctor gave him strong opiates, which have kept him sleeping. He thinks he cannot live, but says there may be hope, if he lives till morning."

"And poor Mrs. Brock!"

"Is calmer, now."

"And Cathy!"

"Cathy is quieter, too, poor girl. She kept up long enough to telegraph to her brother, and then broke down, and fainted away. I saw her comfortably in bed before I came in. It is a great shock to them all. This poor boy looks as if a little hot coffee wouldn't hurt him;" she continued, as Bony Shucks sidled in, one eye on us and one on the fire.

"You've been working hard, Bony," said mother.

"Guess I have — but couldn't save anything. Nothing for Genie and I, no more; we'll starve."

"Not so bad as that, my boy," said mother, cheerily, as she gave him a bowl of coffee and bread and butter, which he ate as if he had not eaten before for a month.

Father came in, hung up his overcoat without speaking, and sat down to the table, after washing his hands. In another minute the doctor followed, and very glad he seemed of a cup of coffee.

"Well, this is a bad night's work," he said, "that is —" and breaking some bread in his bowl, he sat staring upon vacancy.

"How did you leave our neighbor?" asked mother.

The little doctor shook his head, and his very spectacles looked sad.

"It's a bad case. I don't like to say much about it; but if —"

We all waited patiently for the continuation of his sentence.

"You see the back is injured — spine," he said, sharply. "The man will never in all probability, stand upon his feet again. If he lives, he will be as helpless as a new born baby — that is —" and the doctor stared before him.

"A bad night's work," muttered father. "For all of us," he added, *sotto voce*, but mother heard him.

"We ought to be so thankful!" she said, cheerfully, but her eyes were shining with tears as she looked at us all. I knew what she meant. We were all together, and but for heaven's protecting care the wall might have crushed my father, who was in the thick of danger.

"Shucks, what are you doing here?" asked father, when he left the table.

"Ain't got nowheres to go," the boy made answer.

“Where is your sister?”

“Somebody took Genie, but said there wasn’t no room for me,” replied the boy.

“Well, there’s no room here, is there, mother?”

“Just for to-night he might sleep on the bed in the garret. To-morrow, perhaps, he can find some other place,” said mother, and lighted him up the stairs. When she came back Mr. Trever was seated at the table, taking his turn at the coffee. Mr. Trever was our minister. He had heard of the accident, and father’s name was mixed up with it. Some one met him near the door, however, and told him who it was.

“Mrs. Brock seemed very glad to see me,” he said, between the sips, “but Mr. Brock declined. I half expected he would, for I never could get a word with him; and I notice of late that he never comes to church. He used to attend quite regularly, but his wife tells me that he is very sensitive about talking upon religious matters, and I ran my eye over the titles of two or three books in his library, which gave me a clue to the reason. I hope God in his mercy will spare him that he may live to see his error.”

• My mother was smiling to herself. I always

turned to her face when anything was said in her presence that perplexed or annoyed me.

“Mr. Brock is a very honest man in all his opinions,” she said, “and he certainly tries to do right as nearly as he can by walking in his own strength. He needs practice perhaps, more than precept, and that he sees in the example set him by his wife and daughter. They used to be continually talking to, and irritating him, but finally Mrs. Brock thought there might be a better way, as indeed there was. They simply left him in the hands of God, and continued to pray, not to argue. God has his own way of teaching His own truths, you know.”

“Yes, you are right,” said Mr. Trever, “you are right, quite right; this terrible accident may be one of His methods.”

“Not a particularly agreeable one,” said father, who had looked perplexed ever since his return.

“He has refused better terms,” said my mother. “To be morally enlightened requires only an ordinary process of mental energy, but to be spiritually enlightened, requires not only to understand and grasp with the mind but to grasp with the heart. His mind is always clear, but his

heart is in darkness. It has not yet been touched. We must wait God's time, now, and His discipline."

"Yes, yes," said the minister, fervently, "you are always right, Mrs. Gregory. It is not for us to judge the Master. He has His own ways, His own methods. It is very late," he added, as the little mantel clock struck twelve. "Shall we give thanks and ask His blessing?"

We all knelt down round the fire, and though we had a keen sorrow on which to lay our tired heads that night, as on a pillow of stone, still we felt that His blessing laid down with us.





CHAPTER V.

ALMOST HEART-BROKEN.

"In the circle pleasure smiles."

I WAS crossing the hall in the morning, when Dick opened the door, and his eyes fell upon the velocipede, which I had caused to be put outside of his room.

I found myself laughing heartily at the wonder in his face, before he had spoken a word.

"Jemima!" was his first startled exclamation, "where did that come from?"

"Why faith brought it," I said.

"Faith! I'd forgotten all about faith and everything else," he responded, getting down on one knee and inspecting the velocipede. "Why, it's a beauty! just as good and strong! no cheat about that.. I guess you are the providence this

time, Miss Dolly, and the faith, too. What can I do to show you how glad I am?"

"Be a good boy," I said, laughing, as I moved on.

"But see here, Dolly, our circumstances are altered since you bought this pretty thing. I don't think we can afford to keep it, do you?"

"It may become a source of income," I replied. "Quite a thriving little trade might be carried on by the help of a velocipede."

"That's so!" he laughed back. "How handy it will be to carry letters to the office, eh? And to go over to Abbotville, if mamma wanted anything. Well, I never was so pleased in my life. What a beauty she is! I shall call her the Dolly, may I?"

How his eyes sparkled and his cheeks glowed! My five dollars had brought a large harvest of happiness, besides gladdening the heart of a poor widow. Dick's gratitude was a pleasant thing to see. In a five minutes reverie he had grown up to stalwart manhood, always remembering that little act of self-denial, and being the better for it.

"Poor Cathy Brock!" said Dick, looking out of the window.

When I went down stairs, Cathy was there,

waiting for something my mother was preparing. Poor Cathy, indeed. Her honest blue eyes were red with weeping; my heart ached to see how pale and worn she looked.

"How is he?" I asked, holding her in my arms for a moment as I kissed her white lips.

"Alive," she said, with quivering voice. "The doctor hasn't been yet; he has no pain, and I believe that is worse for him." She added, "Come in if you can."

I promised to go in after breakfast, and as soon as Harry was comfortably dressed, I put on my hat and went over to the Brocks. It was only a few yards away; but I could not bear to open the door. Cathy saw me through the window and came out, took my hand and led me into the little parlor. I was trembling all over. They had not moved him, yet. He lay upon a bed lounge, quite motionless, only the handsome face seemed all alive, though the dark eyes were very languid. Mrs. Brock was pouring out some medicine, but she came forward eagerly.

"He will be so glad to see you," she said. "The doctor has been here, and given us a little comfort. He may not move for a long, long while,

but some time — ” she could get no further. The drops from her eyes fell faster and larger than the liquid she was preparing. I went to the side of the couch.

“O here you are, my very good friend!” he said, faintly, with a smile. “You see I cannot hand you a chair, or attend in the least to your comfort.”

“As to the chair, no matter,” I said, “I can very easily help myself. “I am so glad to find you able to speak!”

“O yes, my tongue runs easily, and the numb feeling has gone out of my hands; but for the rest of me, I might as well be dead.”

“Don’t say that, my love,” exclaimed his wife, who came forward to give him his medicine. “I am thankful with every breath I draw to the good Being for sparing you to us.”

“No, no. I say I had better be dead,” he responded, bitterly. “I thank nobody,” he muttered in an undertone, his face growing dark. “However, we won’t talk about it, now. Has anybody heard from Garcelon? Not that it matters to him, the loss of the mills, for I dare say they were well insured. Garcelon has plenty of irons in the fire.”

I said that we had heard nothing.

“Ah! I dare say he'll be down to-day, though I heard he had gone after his daughter, Miss Gabrielle. Her education is about finished, and she'll be coming here to Garcelon house, I suppose. They are getting ready for her. Six years she has been gone. Do you remember her, Miss Dolly?”

I was smiling at the pleasant recollections his words had evoked. Did I remember her! why she was the dearest companion I had in the world, in those days. So beautiful, her great dreamy gray eyes shaded with the longest lashes, her perfect features and the expression of soul transfiguring them, as a soft light within a chrystal vase. She was only twelve, then, I was ten, her father was a rich man, mine, by a combination of untoward circumstances, comparatively poor, and yet we were the firmest of friends. I being the youngest, felt a sort of worshipful love towards her, and would have performed the most menial service through my fervent though childish reverence. Since then, though Cathy had in a great measure, taken her place, I had kept a shrine in my memory for her, though I had heard but seldom

from the institution where she had been placed, to finish her education.

Cathy stopped now and then to listen and to look. The room was so bright with sunlight! It seemed almost a mockery that it should shine on him, lying there almost as helpless as a dead man. The little piano with its piles of music, the flute case, the violin, the two ebony music stands, the old fashioned but pretty furniture, the table still standing with its snowy linen cloth falling to the floor on either side, everything was so suggestive of happiness and home comfort, and here in one ruthless hour a shadow had fallen over it all. I don't think I should have felt so sad if I had been standing beside his coffin.

"I don't know how to bear it, indeed I don't," said the heart-broken wife, as she followed me to the door. "He is never going to stand upon his feet again, never, never, if he should live for years, and he so active, so happy in activity! How shall I tell him? for he will want to know before long. I am not like thy mother, who traces the hand of God in everything, even in poor Fanny Pezzito's hard case."

Fanny Pezzito was a delicate little woman, not

yet twenty ; an orphan, who had wed at seventeen, lost her baby at nineteen, and was now dying of consumption. She had married an Italian musician, a man of contemptible traits, who treated her brutally, and who was waiting impatiently for her to die. The poor little soul was almost friendless, and but for my mother, who found time amidst all her duties, to spend sometimes two or three hours a day with her, would have suffered from neglect.

“Now, Dolly, take care of things while I am over to Fanny’s,” had come to be the familiar, daily salutation to me.

“But, mother, you will get sick,” I pleaded sometimes.

“When I do get sick, Dolly, then I’ll stop,” mother would laugh back, looking so healthy and happy.

“Mrs. Gregory,” said Fanny one day, “I have been asking God to pour down all manner of blessings on you. You have been an angel to me ; you have protected me from my husband’s wicked temper, for if I say I will tell you, he stops like one scared ; you have given me food and rest, and above all, your happy face has been like a gospel

to me. You have taught me to know God and to love Him, me that was more like a heathen than a Christian woman. You have left your own home to minister in this poor, mean house; you have washed my hands and my feet, and better than that," — and the tears were raining down her cheeks now, — "you have kissed me, and petted me, and called me 'dear' and 'daughter,' and," with a half, convulsive sob, "it seemed as if I *wanted that more than anything else*. I was so hungry for a kind word after my baby died. O, when I die, if I do go to that blessed place, I will tell everybody what a poor miserable burden I was, and what a glorious, beautiful ministering spirit you have been to me. Dear lady, the very feel of your hand is like medicine to a broken heart."

But I left Mrs. Brock, perhaps too abruptly, to relate this little episode. She still stood at the door, looking wanly out.

"You expect your son, do you not?" I asked, for the sight of her sorrow was terrible to me.

"Yes, by the next train. Poor Ernst! how will he bear up under it, and what shall we all do?"

I could say nothing,—perhaps that was best; comfort would come in time, in God's time; so only pressing her trembling fingers hard, to express the sympathy I felt, I left her and went home. All the outside world was so bright and beautiful, and yet how many aching hearts there were, how many suffering bodies! I looked up to the smiling heavens—God must see it all, and yet He did not lessen the sunshine, or throw a pall over the earth because of this universal wretchedness. How strange it seemed, how mysterious! But then I had seen my own mother smile over many a heartache. I had heard her say in the midst of keen sorrow, “we shall forget all this, when we catch the first glimpse of heaven,” and so had associated the bright anticipations of the future, with the suffering of this lower life.





CHAPTER VI.

THE POWER OF PRINCIPLE.

"Mine is the spell of power."

I TOLD mother all the news, how that poor Mr. Brock's fate was sealed as to this world; of Miss Garcelon's expected visit home — and that Ernst Brock was hourly looked for.

"I wonder," I said, a little while afterward, "if Gabrielle will call upon me? and oh, how beautiful she must be by this time!"

Mother was unpinning a roll of cotton cut into garments for some of our poor people, and presently I was busy with my needle.

"What do you think, mother," I asked, "do you suppose Gabrielle will call?"

"Isn't it your place to call there?" responded mother.

"Oh, I never could do that!" I said. "Even if my clothes were not shabby—even if—"

"Whose is the pride, now?" asked mother, quietly.

"Of course, I am proud. Look at her circumstances and mine—her education, and mine—her manner of living, and—ours! And then she has made new friends, she may have forgotten me, utterly. Would you call on her, mother?"

"If the old love has not grown too cold," said my mother, smiling.

"I'll think about it," I said, after a moment. Then mother went to Harry, who had called her, and my father came in. There was news in his face.

"Garcelon is down here," he said. "He left his daughter at Bartonville, and came as soon as he heard of the fire. He means to do well by the Brocks. It wont cost them much for medicine, at all events."

He sat down in his arm-chair, looking meditatively into the fire.

"There's another thing he's done," he said, smiling, "I wonder what your mother would say to it."

"Say to what?" asked mother, coming in at that moment.

"Garcelon has offered me a situation, a first class one."

"So soon!" exclaimed mother, her eyes brightening.

"With nearly double the wages."

"And have you accepted?"

"No! I've come home to talk it over, first."

"What is it?"

He looked up and looked down again, and grew very grave.

"A sort of inspectorship, I imagine, more like my own business — but"

He had been speaking slower and slower.

"That will be pleasanter for you — and almost double the salary! Why, it seems like a providence!"

"Wait a minute, wife; you may have heard that Garcelon carries on a large distillery."

"Yes!" her face grew suddenly grave — "is it that?"

"It is that!"

"Then, John, say no!" said mother, resolutely.

"I thought that's the way you'd counsel me,"

said father, with just a shade of impatience in his face.

“Then what did you come to me for, dear?”

“As if I could make any sort of a bargain without consulting you! I always have, and I always shall, I suppose. But I want you to think this matter over. It is, in one sense, a god-send. There will be three months of idleness in this place, for it will take all of that time to rebuild the mills and set them going. We can’t afford to be idle for three months, can we?”

“We can’t afford to take the wages of sin, for any time,” said my mother, calmly.

“Well! it’s the way you look at it. I am to oversee a certain part of the business, nothing immediately connected with its more objectionable features. Mr. Garcelon pays me a high compliment—at least he thinks he does. There are hundreds waiting for this one chance, and he gives it to me. Think it over; enough salary to help Dolly on with her education.”

My heart beat high for a moment, with the wild hope that my mother would see the matter in a favorable light.

“Something else will come, if we wait, dear

John," she said, pleadingly. "God will plan for us, if we do what we know to be right, and surely evil is not good. If you think for one moment of the ruined souls and bodies that business stands for, you certainly cannot accept."

"You always reason me out of my own convictions," he said, just a little impatiently, and rose, setting his chair aside, hastily. Then he left the room, and mother sat down with tears on lashes. It was in that moment that my eyes were fully opened to the undying beauty of principle.

"Here is a chance she has sighed for, prayed for," I thought, "the promise of money enough to live without constant self denial, and yet she refuses it. But her faith—is it shocked? is it shaken? For certainly my father will not get a second offer of like importance; of that fact she must be perfectly aware. And yet she says no."

"And suppose we become poorer and poorer!" The thought slipped into language—I did not mean it should.

"But I don't believe we shall get poorer, my daughter. Oh, no, on the contrary, we shall gain by the refusal to commit sin."

"It's very dark, now," I said.

“It will be lighter by-and-by. I never yet asked God for anything that He did not give me, if I waited patiently. If only your father will wait, the way will be opened. But should our difficulties increase, we shall bear the burden *innocently*. In the other case, to do that would be simply impossible. I should carry a hundred thousand ruined souls on my heart. How long could one keep up under such a load as that? Why, it would send me to my grave.”

We did not see my father again till supper time. Then I knew by his manner, that he had refused the place. Two days after a fairly remunerative situation was offered him, which he at once accepted. When he told us there was a look in his eyes of mingled gratitude and wonder. It seemed to me that he was thanking God for giving him such a treasure as my mother.

I saw Mr. Garcelon go into neighbor Brock's, in company with Mr. Ernst Brock. The young man is taller than his father, and has his handsome, thoughtful face. I sat at the window, trying to imagine the scene of their meeting. It will be a bitter draught for Mr. Brock to be under obligations, even to his own children.

For I was very sure that Cathy would strain every nerve to accomplish something toward the support of the family. Her one beautiful talent was not given her to hide under a bushel.

A little later, mother was called to the Brocks again. Mrs. Brock was asleep, and the doctor wanted to leave his directions with some one who was quite as competent. When she came back, she brought a message from Cathy.

"You had better go in there, a little while," mother said, "the men are talking business in the parlor, and Cathy is very nervous. You will find her in the back sitting room."

It was well I went; the poor girl was almost overcome with fatigue and grief.

"It's so dreadful to see him lying there, and to feel that he will never get up again," she sobbed. "Oh, Dolly, you can't think how the whole world is changed to me. I don't believe I shall ever be happy again! Dear, patient father!"

"But are you not glad that his life is spared?" I asked, trying to comfort her. "Suppose he had been brought home — dead."

"I know — I try to look at it that way, and I thank God for his life — but he does not. Over

and over again he has said, if only he had been killed outright. How will he bear it—this forced inaction?”

“He will grow accustomed to it, and so will you. What does your brother say?”

“Oh, Ernst! I did not see him at the first. He feels it dreadfully, of course—but not as we do who have been with him so much more. He wants, in time, to take us to the city, but papa will not listen to it. He thinks it better economy to stay here, and so it will be. Mr. Garcelon has been very kind, and insists on continuing the salary for three months. That will be a very great help. Everybody is so good.”

I urged the excited girl to lie down upon the lounge, and presently I was sitting by her, trying to soothe her by passing my hand over her hot forehead.

The door opened, and Ernst came in. Cathy sprang up, and her eyes brightened.

“The paper has given out, Cathy, where shall I get some more?” he asked.

“I’ll get it—it’s up stairs,” she said, with nervous gestures, “and Ernst—this is our good, kind neighbor, the daughter of Mrs. Gregory.

Dolly, this is my brother," so saying, as he came forward to shake hands with me, she ran out of the room.

I had never met Ernst Brock, but I had formed a pretty fair opinion of him from Cathy's description. It seemed strange that this tall, powerful looking young man, should be the son of the slender, impetuous musician. His face was a German face, there was no mistaking that, but blended with his somewhat sterner features, were the delicate lines that made his father's countenance so harmonious.

He seemed for a moment not to know what to say, after his sister had disappeared.

"This must be a sad coming home to you, Mr. Brock," I said.

"It is. I was totally unprepared for it. My father was in the city last week, and I particularly noticed how well he was looking. It's a sad accident. Were there others injured? I forgot to ask."

"No others," I said.

Then he walked to the window, which looked out upon the bright, pretty yard. Bony was sweeping down the paved walk to the gate. He

would sweep a while, then pull off his hat, look up to the sky and round in an absent way, rub his head and put on his hat again. He made an odd figure, certainly, and the hitching movement of his right shoulder heightened the grotesqueness of his appearance.

“Has my mother a new servant?” asked Ernest.

I explained that it was a lad out of employment, just now, a hand in the mills; that he was probably working at odd jobs.

“He has a good head,” the young man said, contemptively.

I wanted to laugh; poor Bony! who was looked upon as little better than an idiot — whom nobody cared for — unless it was my mother, nobody felt bound to respect. It certainly showed a want of perception — so I thought — in this tall, handsome business man — if he could find any good points in the poor lad at first sight. I had yet to learn that he was always looking for good points, and consequently they always presented themselves to him.

Cathy came in presently, with the paper, and with a courteous bow to me, Ernst went into the other room.

“Dear Ernst!” said Cathy, as she sat down by my side, and put her arms about me, “Isn’t he a noble boy? Oh, Cathy, I hope you like him.”

“He is very handsome,” I said, “and I certainly do not dislike him.”

“He is so thoughtful,” continued Cathy, in a low voice. “I could not have guessed how shocked he was, by his manner, when he first came. I didn’t dream of it, till he turned from poor father to the window—and his very countenance seemed changed. But still he talked cheerfully, and every now and then, a heavy tear would fall over his cheeks. He is a great comfort to us, dear Ernst!”

Once again I coaxed Cathy to lie down, and presently her eyes closed, and I left her sleeping quietly.

Just here I shall let another hand go on with the story for a while, and resume my pen bye-and-bye.



CHAPTER VII.

GABRIELLE GARCELON.

"Each to the heart appealing."

GOOD-BYE, Nelly! good-bye, Bertha! Girls come and see me. I invite you all, for you know I am to be sole mistress of Garcelon House. Helen," she added in an undertone, "you'll walk down to the gate with me? O, Helen!"

The superbly curved lips quivered as Gabrielle Garcelon drew within her arm the hand of Helen Trevort, two years her senior. Slowly they left the doors of the quaint old Academy, whose walls in the waning sunlight shone like jasper and emerald. Everywhere rioted ivy leaves and mosses green and golden. The trees were alive with birds, and how they did chatter as they sought

their quarters for the night ! The trim old garden looked as if lying under a veil of gossamer and diamonds, for the dew fell early on that upland country. Everywhere in the distance could be seen that same translucent shimmer of gray light, whitened a little by the departing glory of the day.

The two girls walked quietly down the smoothly worn path, towards the old gothic gates. Helen, the elder and graver, had twisted a brown veil about her head, and a shapely head it was. Gabrielle's face was beautiful, passing beautiful. Roses and lilies of clearness and bloom, and great shining eyes that mirrored every thought and emotion. Were the eyes blue? You were not sure. Purple they seemed sometimes, and at others, under strong excitement, black as night. Now they were as blue as the sky, because they were sorrowful, and almost brimmed with tears.

Helen was not as beautiful, but there was character in her face, her form, her walk. Especially in the lovely contour of her head, was her chief charm. Her face was grave, the features, well chiselled, gave evidence in their repose of a firm will, and the power to bear suffering with fortitude.

One of the teachers, standing in the door-way,

clasped her white hands, as under the brown shadows of the portals, she watched the receding figures.

“What waits for her out in the world?” she murmured. “Here she was safe for a time. She was very dear to us, very dear.” And then only her lips moved. Her tender soul was sending up a prayer for the future of Gabrielle. Meantime the gate was reached.

“You know, dear Helen I can’t say good-bye,” said Gabrielle, chokingly.

“And for me, dearest, think how much harder it must be,” said Helen, her voice trembling.

“You have been everything to me, sister, counsellor and friend, and I don’t know how to live without you. Every morning for six long years my eyes have first rested upon your face. O, how I love you, now that we are parting, it may be forever.”

“Hush, darling, that is impossible. ‘Let me give you old Becky’s message. (Becky was the housekeeper.) ‘Tell her to be a true, good woman,’ she called out, as I passed her door; and now — the man there seems impatient — kiss me, don’t say good-bye; my first letter will follow

you, to-morrow; good night, and a happy return home."

Gabrielle drew down her veil with a sob, the iron gate opened, the door of the handsome carriage was flung wide, and the girl buried herself in the silken cushions, weeping as if her heart would break. Then the liveried coachman turned the shining handle, whistled under his breath, climbed into his seat, and the carriage was soon lost to the sight of the solitary watcher at the iron gate.

Helen turned sadly away and walked back to the school with a heavy heart. There was no happy home or loving father awaiting her return. Toil was her heritage, for she was poor and an orphan. Instead of going among friends for the holidays, she was to remain at the school, and with the new term, commence her career as under-teacher, for which she was to receive a small salary.

"She is going to be so happy!" murmured Helen, as she moved slowly on, and the bell for prayers sounded on the still air. "Rich and beautiful, with a father who worships her, and plenty of friends, she will soon get over the sorrow

of parting with us, and though she will never forget me, she will find solace in her new associations, no doubt."

"Helen Trevort, you keep us waiting," said one of the teachers, in a severe tone; and the girl passed silently into the refectory, and glided to her seat.

"Dear, dear Helen!" exclaimed Gabrielle, as the carriage rolled on, "she'll just die in that place, pretty as it is, and all owing to her foolish ideas of independence. She shall come with me; I'll move heaven and earth but she shall. Papa would be quite willing. I shall need a companion of my own age, and to think of her, moping her life away in that dull old place,—not but what I shall miss them all, the pretty rooms, and the garden, and the teachers,—when she might live care-free! Well, I will tell papa about it, and we will see what can be done."

It was ten miles to Bartonville, where her father was waiting for her, at the house of an old friend, General Leon. Gabrielle had spent nearly all her vacations there, and as her grief abated she began to look forward with interest to the pleasures awaiting her. General Leon was rich, a gentleman of the old school, and devoted to his friends.

Jaqueline, his only daughter, a romping girl of fifteen, whom the General declared he had given up all hope of taming, was devoted to Gabrielle, and Baron, a young man over thirty, treated the beautiful girl with great deference, and always made her welcome assured.

Gabrielle leaned back in the carriage, the tears dried on her cheeks, and allowed her school-girl fancies to take possession of her. For the last two years, Helen had accompanied her to Castle Brook,—so wild Jaqueline had christened the family mansion,—and it had seemed to the young dreamer as if her friend's advent lent a new light to Baron's eyes, and a new brightness to his countenance.

"If it only could be so!" she reiterated, hugging her pet idea. "If only Baron would marry Helen! She could make Jack presentable if anybody could; and O, what a glorious wife she would be! No need to go governessing, or teach those little idiots in the low classes. But just as likely as not she would refuse him, because she is poor. Poor! I wish I was as rich in all the graces as she is,—about as near perfection as anybody can be;" and musing and dreaming, she fell asleep.



CHAPTER VIII.

SENDING FOR HELEN.

“When the violet blows.”



H, Gabrielle!”

“Take care, you will frighten her!”

and Baron lowered his torch, as the girl with a little cry and a wild glance, looked about her.

It was an odd sight, this impromptu torchlight procession, but then, the Leons were a law unto themselves, and were famous in that part of the country, for their original way of doing things.

“Oh, papa! Jack! Baron! dear General! So I am really at Castle Brook! I’m so glad! How sound asleep I must have been! If you only knew what a unique tableau you make against the trees and the dark, your faces all lighted by

that red glare! What a nice idea — a torchlight procession, out in the country! It's splendid! I'm so glad to see you, only I only wish Helen had come."

"Why didn't she? we all like her," cried Jack, who looked a thorough Italian, her coal black hair curling against the wide brim of the straw hat, half off her head, and her fine black eyes sparkling with pleasure.

General Leon helped Gabrielle out of the carriage, and sent the coachman off. Then in a sort of procession, the torches bringing out now and then the fair beauty of the trees, and outlining the stately mansion beyond, they walked up the wide flight of steps, and entered the vestibule, which was all warmth, light and beauty.

"I'm to have her till she's rested," said Jack, taking Gabrielle by the hand, and running backwards as she kept up a fire of small talk and compliments, and presently the two girls were ensconced in opposite chairs, before a bright, wood fire, (for the evening was damp,) that brought out the rich colors of the great rug, on the hearth, and gave a cheerful glitter to the old fashioned but handsome furniture.

"Here comes Anne!" said Jack, starting up, and almost taking the fender with her.

"I catch everything," she added, laughingly, as she opened the door, and disclosed a staid maid servant, tray in hand, upon which smoked some goodly viands, "except the prevailing influenza," she added. "I don't keep still long enough to let that take a good hold of me, I expect. There, Anne, now it's ready," she continued, wheeling up the table, and the woman placed the things upon the napkin she had brought, and with a few pleasant words of welcome to Gabrielle, left the room.

"Anne thinks you and Helen are both angels," said Jack, when the woman had gone, "in fact, I believe all the servants half worship you. They know there's going to be a lull in the domestic breeze, when you come, because of course, then I'm on my good behavior. I wish you had brought Helen. Your father told us he had telegraphed you from Glintwood, so of course it was too late, or we should have written and asked her to come with you. Does she stay at the academy?"

"Yes, dear Helen," said Gabrielle, realizing her

loss, "and a lonesome time she will have of it. I declare I feel as if only half of me was here."

"Take care, or I shall be jealous," laughed Jack; "but, poor girl, one ought to be generous in her case; she is so alone in the world. Do you think she would come?"

"Of course she would. Why, it must seem like a little heaven to her, here. I don't think she was ever so happy in her life as when she was at Castle Brook."

"Perhaps somebody else is happy, too," said Jack, with a little laugh, looking down.

"Oh!" — Gabrielle hesitated, the glow on her cheek deepening. "I wish I could think so. Is it — Baron?"

"Well — I've had my thoughts," said Jack, gaily, "my guesses and suspicions, and I've all but charged him with it. I didn't quite dare to do that. But I'm sure she's just the girl would suit him."

"She is poor, you know."

"That's no objection. Baron is rich enough. She's so much nicer than any of the girls about here, who are setting their caps for him. Bell Hoxby, the ugliest girl you ever saw, worth

millions, almost, and so stupid, though she sings well enough, and Tiny Hoyt, a veritable flesh and blood wax doll. Oh, how I do dislike them! You ought to see them make for him the moment he is in sight. They don't like me, because I take them off, and tease them, and keep Baron away from them, and understand all their nice little dodges. It makes me sick to hear them dear him — 'dear Mr. Baron, wont you, or will you!' — they haven't any sense."

Gabrielle, refreshed, warmed, exhilarated, perhaps, with the delicate yet deliciously strong tea, lay back in the great chair and laughed. Her voice rang out like the chimes of a silver bell, for it was soft, rich and singularly musical.

"You bring Helen out in strong contrast," she said, "just fancy her 'dearing' anybody. Oh, she's so gentle, and yet so proud! There's such a spirit to her beauty, and she don't think herself handsome. Why, if I had that Grecian head of hers, I should be vain. I know I should."

"Her head is fine, isn't it? Oh, now I've caught him, nicely," and she laughed, clapping her hands, "now I've got him! It's your mention of the head, made me think of it. I found

some verses, yesterday; they were Baron's, for nobody else in this house possesses the poet's frenzy, and he was describing some ideal. I thought—now I know it was Helen Trevort. He is clean gone, you may be sure of it—that is the latest and strongest proof. I'm going to write a letter this night, and tell Helen that we expect her, we want her and we shall die without her. I shouldn't be happy thinking of her alone in that great, dull school."

Off she ran, and in a moment more her pen was flying over the paper.

"There! I'll post it the first thing in the morning, and—do you believe she will come?"

"I hope she will," said Gabrielle, slowly. "Let me write a postscript."

She dashed off a few words, smiling as she did so.

"There! I've told her if she values my friendship, she will come, and that you will send for her."

"Yes, of course—earlier than we did for you. Papa had to use the horses this morning, and give them a good rest. Now, will you go to bed."

"Where am I to sleep?" asked Gabrielle.

“Why, just here, with me. Do you see that little, French bedstead peeping out by the side of ‘old clumsy,’ as I call mine? Well, that’s for you. Our grandest, guest chamber, where you and Helen slept, is under repair, the roof leaked dreadfully, and spoiled the ceiling, before we knew, and a week ago, down came the plastering. So you must put up with more limited accommodations.”

“I like it—I’m glad of it,” said Gabrielle, fervently. “I never felt quite at my ease in that great, grand room. This is so much cosier, and then it is so pleasant to have company.”

• “Let me do your hair, to-night. Oh, how long and beautiful! Poor me! I have to keep mine short, I have such terrible headaches when it thickens,” said Jack, vivaciously. “I shall never be a young lady while my head looks like a boy’s, and I’m glad of it. I want none of the beaux dangling after me, even when I grow out of childhood, which I haven’t done yet. Heigho, my greatest ambition is to be an aunt. I think I never shall have a husband of my own, they must be so troublesome. So I’ll always live with Baron and Helen, if only they will marry, and

drive off every man-jack that comes along. I mean it!" she added, nodding brightly.

It was a pretty sight to see the two girls in the fire light, Gabrielle with her long chestnut hair, with glints of gold, hanging about her like a garment, her lovely face serious yet smiling, and Jack shifting from side to side, as she held the locks up in great bows, or plaits, or shining coils. Gabrielle was devoutly glad, when she pronounced her work done.





CHAPTER IX.

WITHOUT FAITH.

"When the rose is fair and bright."

IN the morning, spite of the dew and light fog, through which the distant hills shone in pink and purple, amber and green, the two girls were out on the lawn looking among the shrubbery for flowers.

"It's so pretty to have a little bouquet at your plate," said Jack. "Baron appreciates it, though he seldom gets it. My hours are not so early as yours, so you see what a compliment I paid you by rising at six."

"We breakfasted at six, at school," said Gabrielle.

"You poor martyrs! By-the-way, Helen will get our note to-day. She comes, she comes not;"

and Jack began pulling the crimson petals of a rose.

"She comes!" she cried, throwing the last leaf to the ground, "and there goes the pride of Baron's bouquet."

"Never mind, I'll give him this," said Gabrielle, who had been treasuring a small rose for her collar knot.

"There's the bell for prayers!" said Jack. "How I shall astonish them all by being on time! Come."

The girls entered the house by a side door, and went into the loftily-ceiled library, whose crimson walls took a yet deeper shade from the ruddy fire blazing on the hearth. This room spoke more vividly than any other of the inclinations and taste of its occupants. There were eight or ten niches filled with books from floor to ceiling. Great globes hung in bronze stands, costly maps were framed as screens, curious gleanings from many a foreign shore, filled glass cases, while at the southern front, a small hot-house held rare plants from all countries.

The breakfast room was large, bright and cheerful, looking out on one side on the lawn, on the other on the garden.

Baron did appreciate his bouquet. His fine eyes lighted up at sight of it, and he bowed toward the two girls across the long table.

"You see, he likes it, and papa is smelling his," said Jack, *sotto voce*. "Do you know I think in all the world it would be hard to find two handsomer men than papa and Baron, not but what your papa is fine looking," she added, in an apologetic manner, laughing.

"But not a bit handsome," rejoined Gabrielle.

"Where did you get your beauty from?" queried Jack.

"I! my beauty!" exclaimed Gabrielle, blushing.

"Yes, there's no use in your denying that you are aware of the fact that you are a beauty. Do you know I fell in love with you at first sight? Pity for me, if I were a man," and she sighed in mock, lugubrious fashion. "What Baron's heart must have been that he kept it whole till he saw Helen, passes my comprehension. Papa!" she cried, in her usual fashion, "I've sent for Helen."

"Helen! Helen!" said the General, looking meditatively into his coffee cup.

"There! he has forgotten her. *You* remember

her, Baron," and she sent a clear, searching, innocently unconscious glance, across the table.

"Miss Trevort, father," said Baron, a flush rising in his dark cheeks. "She was here last summer with Miss Garcelon."

"Oh, yes, yes, a fine girl! I remember. She will be very welcome."

"Thank you, papa, said Jack, gratefully, — "they're so glad of any event that will keep me quiet for a week," she added in an undertone. "But didn't you see Baron color, and even his lips grew redder, at mention of Helen? You might speak of every other girl we know, and his countenance would remain as unchanged as the hills over yonder. Dear, dear, I hope I never shall be in love. It's well enough for men, but it must be an awful bore to a woman."

Baron followed the two girls out of the breakfast room, to what by courtesy was called a sitting room, but in one corner of which, divided by a large Japanese screen, was Baron's studio. It was a wide, bay window, quite a room by itself, with a glass roof, and gave him just the light he wanted.

The young man fancied that he could paint —

and for an amateur he showed unusual genius — and spent a great deal of time at his easel, while the rest of the family sewed, talked, or lounged as they liked. Many times during the day they were all together, as the General, when he found anything of more than ordinary interest in a book or magazine, would leave his study and read it aloud to the assembled family in this place.

Mrs. Leon went directly for her basket of wools. Her chief employment was knitting. She was a portly, handsome, silent woman, very fond of her husband and children, and caring for little else. Baron walked to the window, Jack drew up two great chairs near the fire, and went out to get a book of drawings. Then Baron appropriated the chair next to Gabrielle, and they chatted on common place topics. Suddenly he startled her by a question :

“Do you think she will come?”

“Helen?” Gabrielle’s heart beat faster. “I am almost sure she will. She has been so hard at work for the past three months! Of course she will rest at the academy for a few weeks — but that is not exactly the rest she needs.”

“By no means,” said Baron, and listened with

brightening face, while Gabrielle, to whom the theme was a delightful one, talked on of Helen, her sweetness of disposition, her vigor of mind, and beauty of character.

“I want her to come home and stay with me, but she will not listen to it a moment — she is so proud, dear Helen, that she cannot brook dependence — and she has nobody to care for her, you see.”

Baron smiled to himself, and for the second time his face flushed.

“What are her ideas about — that is, does she ever talk upon religious matters?” asked Baron.

“No — not often, but for all that she is the most religious girl I ever knew — not in exactly the way they are at the school, you know. She never makes a parade of it, but one can see it in her daily life.” Gabrielle spoke with enthusiasm, for she remembered hearing Helen say that Baron Leon was one of the finest specimens of manhood she had ever seen, “but what a pity,” she added, “that his tendencies are towards infidelity.” Gabrielle did not believe this, and still it occurred to her that there was something strange in his asking her the question he did; something strange

in his moody silence after she had answered it. She herself had been influenced more by Helen's character, sentiments and example, than by any of the evidences of revealed religion. She had more than a sentimental admiration for goodness, and a great honor of people, who openly approved christianity. She could see, even with her shallow experience, that reverence for its forms was merely a matter of habit at Castle Brook. She had visited here before, and knew that Sunday was passed much as any other day, in driving and walking, and now and then — but very seldom — attending service, there was really no heart-felt observance. Of this Helen had spoken now and then, with a great deal of feeling, and it occurred to Gabrielle, that it might be a drawback to her pleasure, even if she consented to come.

At that minute the General entered the room with several papers in his hand.

"Your father has bad news, my dear, and wished me to tell you that he was obliged to start for the 9.20 train. He could not even stop to say good-bye," the General added, taking out his watch.

"What news?" asked Gabrielle, half rising, her cheeks a shade paler.

"Some of his factories burned down last night in Glintwood. I hope they were insured."

"And the poor people will be thrown out of employment," said Gabrielle, pityingly.

"Do you know I should like to work in a mill, for once in a way," said Jack, who had followed her father.

"Hush, child!" said her mother with a frown.

"Why, don't you suppose girls just as good as I am, have to work for their living?" persisted Jack.

"No, I do not," said her mother, with decision. "Girls brought up as you have been, respect themselves sufficiently to find more suitable work."

"There are some very nice girls in father's mills," said Gabrielle, timidly.

"Comparatively so, or such they seemed to be to your inexperience; but I am afraid, if you were unfortunate enough to be thrown among them, socially, you would soon alter your mind."

"Oh, mamma, it is because we know so little about them that we rate them so low. It seems to me absurd to believe that they are all common or unclean."

Baron had gone behind his screen, and therefore took no part in the conversation. The General left them after his announcement, and presently the room was very still, nothing but the scratching of a pen being heard, and now and then question or answer in a low voice. But Jack could not be restrained long at a time. Baron left his studio.

"Come and see some pictures," said Jack, and they went behind the screen.

The space, all that could be used, was filled with pictures. Books, easy to reach, were placed on low-hung brackets. Engravings littered the deep, bay window, and casts and half finished paintings, stood or laid everywhere. On the easel, was the picture upon which Baron was busy, representing "fairies by moonlight." It was, as the subject demanded, highly idealized, and in the foremost figure, with the silver radiance of a white moon outlining the graceful contour, might be traced a likeness to Helen Trevort.

"I thought you would see it," said Jack. "I told him it was her, but he denied the intention, so I suppose he made the likeness unconsciously."

Gabrielle did not answer.

She had picked up a book and was reading intently, though at random. It was a much used, much read volume, as its worn appearance indicated. Presently her face shadowed, and she let the volume fall with a gesture of disgust.

“Dear me! what’s that?” queried Jack, startled at Gabrielle’s face. “Oh, one of Baron’s books—awfully wicked—but then, I’m afraid it’s papa’s fault. He always declared that we children should not be brought up in any set way—or faith—that we should read and think as we pleased, and Baron has taken advantage of his liberality. Now, I don’t care to read dull books, and they’re awfully dull to me, but now and then Baron reads out loud, and somehow, what Baron likes, I want to like, for I just love him to distraction, the dear fellow. He’s born for a leader, you see; at least I think so. He has originated a club of young men, for what they call free discussion, and they get all sorts of rare books and papers, about all sorts of things. I don’t know what good it can do him, I am sure; he talks very little about it.”

“But such horrible blasphemy!” said Gabrielle, shuddering.

"Yes, I suppose it does seem so to you, because you are new to such things," said Jack, with the volubility of unreflecting youth. "Baron has such queer notions! But then, he is a genius, you know, and something must be allowed for that."

"But don't he believe in the Bible?" asked Gabrielle, her face wearing still a pained expression.

"Well, I don't know," said Jack, reflectively, "as he ever reads it. There isn't a Bible in the house, beside the one papa reads from, in the study. It's odd we have family prayers, but it's habit, you see. Why, you don't think the Bible is intended to be read by everybody, do you? It is only for ministers, and people who belong to the church. Now, papa and mamma belong to the church, though they very seldom go, of late years, but Baron and I never go."

"And why not?"

"I don't know — without it's stupid. The singing is so drony, and I always used to fall asleep when mother took me. Papa says we can learn more of God out in the woods. I am always there, on Sundays."

"But *do* you?" asked Gabrielle.

Jack stood still for a moment, looking thoughtfully from under her finely arched brows, her head bowed a little.

"I don't know," she made candid answer, "I never think much about it — I only care to enjoy myself, and to smell the sweet pine, and — to tell you the truth," she added, laughing, "I think more of myself, and my own comfort, than anybody, or anything else."

"And then, you are so young!" said Gabrielle, half pityingly.

"Why, yes, only fifteen, three whole years younger than my very sage friend."

"I am not quite eighteen, yet," said Gabrielle; "and besides, youth, cannot be Baron's excuse. Baron is old enough."

"Excuse for what?" asked Jack, almost sharply.

"For reading those dreadful books, and for — in short for being a sceptic — perhaps an infidel."

"That's not such a terrible thing," said Jack, "some of the greatest minds of the world, have been sceptical."

Gabrielle shook her head, and drew a long sigh.

"To me it is. You know I'm not particularly religious — and yet, to deny Christ, who died to

save us! What would tempt you to deny the mother who gave you life? 'He that denieth me —' Oh, Jack — it's just horrible. As for Helen —"

"Well, why don't you go on?" asked Jack.

Gabrielle's face was flushed, and Jack looking round, saw that Baron stood just outside.

"What are you two girls talking so earnestly about?" he asked.

"Baron, are you an infidel?" bluntly asked Jack, on the impulse of the moment. She did not pause to consider what he might infer from the question, and Gabrielle felt her cheeks grow hotter.

"Am I an infidel? Well, I don't know that I am anything in particular. I am spending a good deal of time trying to find out. But I noticed that there were letters for you and Miss Gabrielle on the table in the hall."

"Letters!" cried Jack, and rushed out, Gabrielle following.



CHAPTER X.

LETTERS FROM HOME.

“Visions veiled in roseate, light.”

A NOTE came from Helen on the following day. As Gabrielle opened it, she declared that it was full of the mouldy smell of the Seminary garden.

“She comes!” said Jack, striking an attitude, and listening.

“Yes, she says she will come for a week or two,” said Gabrielle.

“She shall stay a month,” responded Jack. “We’ll keep her a prisoner, and oh, what a jolly time she shall have! Gabrielle, we must get up something nice for entertainments. What shall it be? Tableaus — music, charades! Do you suppose we can? I want her to have such a good

time that she will utterly forget the old school, and everything pertaining to it."

"It will be enough that she is here," said Gabrielle, who had just finished reading a letter from home for the second time.

"Is that Helen's letter?"

"No, Helen's letter is only a note, written under the spell of a dreadful headache, she says. There it is—this other, which I was reading when that came, is from my cousin, the lame girl you have heard me speak of—she always writes such bright letters."

"Would it be a sin and a shame for me to see it?"

"Certainly not; I will read you a part of it—that part relating to the fire. They must have had an exciting time of it." And Gabrielle read aloud:

"You should have seen the factories, all ablaze—since there was no help for it, such a picture as they made! All the town was on the hill, looking on—doctor Berg and his sister, all the Worths and Lindsays. You remember that rather pretty Gregory girl, Dolly, they call her, who has the bedridden brother; she was

there with the Brocks, a very nice family that moved here just after you went to school, (to think you have never been back here since.) The Brocks were in the factory — the father, that is, who was book-keeper, and he, poor man, was frightfully injured, so that they say he will not live. Well, the ruins are not so pleasant to look at as the fire was. Four of the best buildings were burned, and nearly three hundred people, in all, turned out of work. They have sent for your father, so the housekeeper is dusting and airing, and putting things to rights, generally, and a queer looking boy they call Bony, is carrying ashes through the cellar into the lots back of the yard. I don't know whether the boy is quite bright, but he acts strangely. He goes round looking at things, and if you notice him, he says in his odd, sing-song voice,

‘Seems to me, I’ve seen all this before — sometime very far back.’ The housekeeper says he is quite a study. I have just got through with hemming a new set of towels and sheets, and pillow cases and table cloths. I hope you will come home in time to celebrate your birthday here. Your father thought you would ; did

he speak to you about it? The Mays drove out from the city, last week — hearing that you were in town. I just hinted something relative to a birthday party, and nearly set them wild. They planned it all out — even to the garden. Those low-limbed horse-chestnut trees would look so well, hung with lanterns in different colors.'

'Do tell her not to omit giving the party on any account, said Miss Sally, pulling up and buttoning her kid gloves, (how is it gloves go on her hand so easily! five buttons, too, and not the least trouble in fastening.)

'You ask about Mrs. Bride. She is much the same as ever. When she is well she takes her place in the kitchen, and badgers all the servants. She still has those fits, as Dooley, her husband, calls them — I think another name would suit them better. When she saw poor Bony Shucks working about, she almost flew at him. I didn't know for a minute, but what she would knock him down. The boy was afraid of her, and kept out of her way, I can tell you. I often wonder why uncle keeps so inefficient a servant, and so rude a woman in the house. She is at times impertinent to everybody, and Dooley has no peace of his life.'

‘I believe I have told you all the news. Everybody is looking forward to your coming, and if you do give a party, it will be an ovation. Come home as soon as you can.’”

“What a nice, chatty letter!” said Jack. “Is your cousin handsome? does she look like you?”

“Not at all,” Gabrielle replied, “she met with an accident when very young, and consequently is lame and disfigured. Both her parents are dead—she has had a lonely lot and life, and yet her letters are always cheerful. Papa gave her a home, years ago, and she has staid with us ever since.”

“But who is this Mrs. Bride?” asked Jack.

“An old servant, who has been in the family nearly twenty years. I think father keeps her mainly because she is so fond of me, for that seems her only redeeming feature. She is lazy and passionate, and has fits, so her husband says. I never remember the house without Biddy Bride. You know my mother died when I was an infant, and Biddy was almost a second mother to me. At any rate, she was my nurse, and carried me through two serious illnesses, and that is what made my father so grateful; she saved my life.”

"How does she look?" asked Jack, who, toying with some wools, and a long, shining needle, seemed to be unwontedly interested in Gabrielle's home and history.

"A portly, handsome woman, though her beauty is rather coarse. I remember her large, blue eyes, and the wonderfully long lashes. Dooley, her husband, is physically her inferior, but he is very fond of her. Indeed, I am inclined to think he is somewhat afraid of her, for she has a furious temper. I remember once, when we were on the road—I was a little thing—a dog came snapping at me, and sprang at my carriage, when she caught it by the neck, and threw it with such violence, that she broke its back, and the dog had to be killed."

"Oh, horrible!" cried Jack, shuddering, "and still it was very grand to save you, of course. And so she is handsome and brave, and has a temper?"

"She shows temper towards everybody but me. She would do anything in the world for me. And I like her very much, of course, as a nurse—almost like a mother."

"How delighted she will be to see you," said Jack.

“Yes. I often wonder what she will say, now I have grown up a young lady. You see I was only twelve years old, when I was sent to school, and a very small child of my age, and she hardly expects to see me so tall, almost out of her reach.”

“And that boy she speaks of; who is he?”

“That I don’t know. I never heard of him before, to my recollection. I must write, and ask her about him.”

“Do—he may be a prince in disguise,” and the girls went down stairs to lunch, laughing merrily over the conceit.

“Oh, but that rather pretty Gregory girl, who is she?” asked Jack, abruptly, as after lunch, the girls sat on the back piazza, sewing. “I mean’t to ask you at the time, but I forgot.”

“Little Dolly!” said Gabrielle, smiling, “how much I did love her, years ago—and indeed I have not forgotten her. She is the daughter of one of the overseers of the mills, a man of whom my father has a great opinion. They are people who have been better off, I think—at any rate, Dolly and I were close friends, and I cried very bitterly when we were parted. I remember the mother, whose face always impressed me; it was

- so spiritually beautiful. Just before I left home for school, her oldest brother was injured by some carriage accident, and I suppose he has never recovered from the shock. Of course, she will be grown and changed, just as I am, but I hope she hasn't forgotten me."

"She will not be your equal, socially, now, will she?" asked Jack, with a grave face.

"You mean that her father is poor, while mine is rich! Jack, I'm not going to let those things influence me, unduly, in the choice of friends. Dolly was a little lady at nine. With such a mother as she has, it is impossible that she should have grown up under any but the purest influences, and her friendship will be an honor to any one."

"Glorious!" cried Jack, with a shining face. "My dear Gabrielle, how glad I am that you consider me worthy to be your friend. There's no sham about you — you are just nobleness itself," and she gave her a hug and a kiss, and then laughed with the tears in her eyes.



CHAPTER XI.

DOLLY'S NARRATIVE.

*"Bear me away by sun and star,
To worlds of softest light afar."*

SNAP went a string! and snap! crack!
another. I started up in dismay.

"What is the matter?" asked mother, her fair face clouded, "You look as if you had lost all your friends."

"My piano! two strings broken, and after all it is nothing but an old rattletrap. Shall I ever be able to get a new one?" I asked, despairingly.

"Well, I don't know," replied mother, musingly, "it's worth thinking about."

"Particularly as I am going to teach, or try to."

"Father can't give it to you, you know," said mother.

Oh, no. I didn't expect that. Father had as much as he could do to give me bread and butter, and clothes; although the clothes came mainly out of an old chest that had belonged to an aunt of mine, and contained several dresses of good material, albeit cut in a quaint fashion.

"How much will new strings cost?" asked mother.

"I don't believe it will be of much use to put in new strings," I said, "something seems to happen to it every day. It's twenty years old."

"Poor old thing!" said my mother, with such a melancholy cadence in her voice, that I burst out laughing.

"It's worth trying for — isn't it worth praying for?" asked mother, softly.

"Praying for a piano!" I exclaimed.

"Why not?" asked mother, gently.

"I don't know — only it seems odd — and somehow — not — right — exactly."

"You have such a very rich Father in Heaven;" and mother's voice sounded sweetly soft and low, just like the whisper of an angel. "He loves you, He is quite willing to help you — only waits, perhaps, to be asked."

“But, mother,” I said, “I am not like you — you have loved and served Him for many years — while I —” tears stopped my voice.

“Well — you do not love Him, then.”

“Oh — I can’t exactly say that — it seems sometimes as if I did, or could, so easily, but something holds me back.”

“And what is the something, dear?”

“Why, I suppose it is — myself,” I made answer, a little startled at mother’s solemn voice.

“That means you love yourself better than you do Him. Why, look at it, my daughter. He only wants your love and your service for your good, not his. It is very simple — just this. In exchange for yourself, which you give Him, He offers you boundless happiness in this world, in spite of its crosses and trials, and an eternity of such glory, as we cannot even conceive of. For our dear Lord says — ‘eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard,’ of anything like the joy, the glory, the delights of heaven.”

I sat full of troubled thoughts, and a little astonished at my mother’s direct utterance. I had considered myself quite a Christian, and was not altogether prepared to change my opinions.

“And if you offer Him yourself,” mother went on, “He will accept you — and that will be His guarantee that He will be around your path and within your life, keeping you constantly from evil — while you confide and delight in Him. There is no other safeguard, dear Dolly, for life and its trials — now do you think there is?”

And that was my mother’s way — she convinced you against your own convictions — and then she left it with you, entirely — to think it out.

All this came of two broken strings! There stood the old piano, spider-legged and dim of varnish, as sober and demure and innocent as its yellow keys and thin rickety frame could look.

The influence of that conversation followed me for days — haunted me. I could not touch the old familiar notes, but the question was thrust at me — “do you love yourself better than God?” and I went around the house, troubled and silent, or else quarrelling, mentally, with my miserable self.

If mother would only allude to it again, I thought, but though she must have noticed my disquietude, she left me to myself, and to that unseen, unknown power, which seemed holding

me from God. No matter on which side I looked, myself blocked the way of promise. Continually I repeated, "I have done this and that—kept the commandments, obeyed my parents, attended church, promised amendments and adhered to my promises—been kind to others, charitable, forgiving—why then had I any cause for uneasiness? Why could I not go to my Father and ask Him?"

Simply because I knew I had kept back something, and that was my own will.

"Why don't you give it up?" asked conscience.

"I—don't know, I am afraid," was the puzzled answer.

"Of what?"

"I don't know—only—I *hate* to give up."

That was just it. I hated to give up—felt that I should not belong to myself—that I must not consult myself, trust myself, believe in myself. This conflict could not go on forever.

One day I went to Mr. Trevor, and he solved my doubts.

"Let me put a case before you," he said, after a brief conversation. "When a child first goes

to school, it *must* obey, whether it can perceive the principles on which obedience is exacted, or not. The strict, naked law demands obedience as a part of the first principles of education. But when the child becomes a rational, thinking and responsible agent, and enters a school of art, it must understand the principle of obedience to certain specific, scientific laws, to perfect its knowledge. The obedience is no longer irksome, but it becomes a pleasure, the more thoroughly the first principles are understood. The toil of learning enters into the future happiness of masterly genius and perfect skill."

"Now, in your school of home, you have been taught to be obedient to the law. An excellent mother and a conscientious father, have both grounded you in these things, and you have learned to discipline yourself, to think virtuously, to do bravely, and to acquit yourself in all the forms of life after a christian method. But there is a higher grade of school than home. You have been serving as a child—you have obeyed the look and commandment of your teachers, and are now ready, if you will it so, to graduate in the school of Christ. You think you have liberty

now, but it is not so. As long as you are the slave of your own will, you will find yourself serving a hard taskmaster. There is no real liberty save in the love and service of the great Master. Choose this day whom ye will serve — the will that is born and imbued with your own infirmities, or that higher will which is the express image of God, and will guide you to happiness here, and to glory hereafter.”

I had chosen, even as he spoke.

“Why, how easy it is?” I cried out with rapture. “It seems as if God had just taken me by the hand.”

“Ah! you have chosen Him for your guide and king, then!” exclaimed the minister, his face all alight. “May grace, peace and mercy go with you, my child. From this hour you are free with the freedom which only God can bestow, that freedom which makes one free indeed.

I went home with a light spirit, singing in my heart all the way. The world seemed actually transformed to me, whereas, the world was no more beautiful than before but my new experience and new trust infused new beauty in the flowers, new melody in the songs of the little

birds, new grace and majesty in the trees by the roadside, new lustre in the sunshine. I wondered at myself, as well as the inanimate things about me. Why had I hesitated? why delayed? How strange that I had not gone at once to the arms of a loving Father, gone to Him with every joy, every care, every trouble! And how free I felt! I could have thrown my arms up, and shouted like a child for joy. It would be such sweet service now, to work for Him, to love and obey Him. And strange as it may seem, I did not care so much for the piano, now. I was willing to leave it all with Him, with every other need and care and wish.

I said nothing to my mother when I went home; she said nothing to me. I only kissed her, and we looked into each other's eyes, and I felt that she understood me. She saw in place of the sad, worn, unsatisfied expression, which was becoming habitual to me, a gladness which I could not conceal and I think just then; she asked nothing more of heaven.

I went into Harry's room. The dear boy was supported by pillows, and caught my hand as I came in.

"It's the first time I've been able to lift myself for years, just this little," he cried, joyfully, "and I believe mother's faith is doing it. No matter how much it made me suffer, she has always been at me to try just a little, and I have tried and tried, and now I'm actually up. I can hardly recognize the fact."

"Oh, Harry, I'm so glad!" I said, and I was so glad that the tears rushed to my eyes, and I ran away to my room, and cried for very happiness. Then I took my new Testament, and read about Christ, and I seemed to see his beautiful, princely face, while to feel that He loved me, that I was an object of interest to HIM, so filled and satisfied my heart, that I almost forgot for the time that I was of and on the earth.

Oh, that first happy experience! Could the wealth of kingdoms buy it from me to-day?

I went down stairs after fulfilling some little home duties, and there found a message from Cathy. It was now nearly a month since the great fire, and workmen were already busy with the new foundations, near which heavy freights of gray stone had been deposited from Black Quarry, a place nearly a mile from Glintwood.

Men had come swarming into the town, carpenters, bricklayers, masons, men of all ages, rough, well-favored, gracious, grumbling; some with heads like Titans, that made one wonder why they were not in some professional way, moulding the destinies of the world, while others scowled at you from under beetling brows, and thrust themselves into your thought by the sheer magnetism of their ugliness. One of these, a mason, my father called in to do some brick-laying about the kitchen hearth, and he talked as learnedly about the leading events of the day, as if he had graduated in all the schools of philosophy and politics, and as he chipped off bits of brick here and there, chipped out from his bright, original mind, some of the clearest and finest theories that ever emanated from the wisest philanthropists of their race.

During this month, the situation of our friends and neighbors had changed but little. There had gradually crept into their lives the quiet of resignation. The discordant forces that had kept them full of unrest, stung with tormenting doubts, battling with the destiny that had stalked so ruthlessly into their pleasant home, had fallen

into the background, and a gentler spirit had taken their place. Wilhelm Brock lay still helpless, his face thin and drawn, his features sharpened by illness, and his great, dreamy, dark eyes, inexpressibly pathetic from their sad, imploring, wistful expression; but it was found that he would not be utterly helpless. The doctor gave hopes that before long he would be able to be removed from the bed to a chair, and that though most of his body was paralyzed, he might entirely regain the use of his hands and arms.

“It is so sweet that thou canst see and hear, and talk, my Wilhelm;” his wife would often say, as she sat beside him with her work, “and when thou canst play the flute, once more — we shall all be so happy again.”

He did not now reply, as he had at first, with nervous impatience, wishing himself dead, and almost cursing his enforced helplessness. He sometimes smiled into the faithful face beside him, and allowed himself to join in her anticipations. That, though, was but seldom, and his smile was more mournful than tears. His greatest enjoyment was to listen to his wife as she played the dearly loved sonatas on the old, spider-legged

piano, and which Cathy accompanied with her violin.

It was May now, and so far the weather had been bright and beautiful. Roses were budding in the gardens, and the woods were quite alive with pale blue and white star-like blossoms, and sweet beyond description with the newly springing life, rising from the death of winter, on every side.

Dick had brought me a bunch of wild flowers that morning, and as I thought of it, I took it out of its little bouquet holder, to give it to the sick man.

How his beautiful eyes glistened at sight of the fragrant things, as he held them in his white, half nerveless hands.

"I was just wishing I could find a few," said his wife, and Cathy was arranging to go out and hunt for some, as soon as she got through her practice.

Just then Cathy came in. She looked flushed and a little wearied.

"You have heard," she said, leading me into the next room, "what I am going to do?"

I shook my head.

“Well, in a short time, there will be a splendid party at Garcelon house. Miss Gabrielle Garcelon will be here to-morrow; so Mr. Garcelon informs us. There will be a great many city people invited, and Mr. Garcelon wishes me to play—only think—before so many! Do you believe me capable? Can I do it?”

“Of course I believe you capable,” I said, “to be sure you can do it.”

“If only papa or my mother could be with me, I don’t think I should care so much, but nothing could induce mamma to go and leave *him*. So you see I shall have to play with a stranger—and so get nervous, perhaps, and fail, miserably. It would be terrible to fail, when so much depends upon it.”

“You won’t fail,” I said.

“I have been thinking—” she hesitated, “if, only you could learn to accompany me.”

“I!” and I started back with a sensation akin to terror. “I should only ruin you—I never play for any one, save you and the home people.”

“Then I fear I must fail,” said Cathy, quite calmly, “for I cannot play with a stranger. The best way will be to give it up altogether.

I do care so much for the twenty dollars! but — ”

“Has he offered you that?” I asked, quite startled, “then you are really going to play for money.”

“Whenever I can get it, honorably,” was the girl’s brief answer. “Ernst must not take the whole burden upon his shoulders. Mr. Garcelon wants to help me — and he is very kind. There will be many city people present, and if I please them, they may speak a good word for me — but perhaps it is best not — I must try some other way.”

I reflected for a moment. It would never do for her to lose this chance, if she was seriously thinking of making music her profession. The people would probably never notice me — perhaps Gabrielle had forgotten me, I rather hoped she had. Besides in my new found happiness, I was conscious of a desire to do good to others, to work for the Master.

“If it will be a help to you,” I said, “I will try. Give me the music, and let me practice it for a few days. When does the party come off?”

“A week from Wednesday,” she said, her

countenance lighting up. "Oh! Dolly! listen!" She had clasped my hands in both hers, and the light fairly streamed from her eyes.

It was a soft, unsteady sound, issuing from the next room, a trifle of trembling melody—just heard—then it ceased.

"It is papa!—he has found strength to hold his flute! Oh, I hope everything from this. And Ernst—I must write to him to-night. The dear fellow will be so pleased. He said if papa could only touch the flute once more, it would be almost equivalent to gaining his health—though of course, we never can expect that."

Just then Mrs. Brock came out into the little room. She looked at us, and we could see that she was too much affected to speak. The tears were in her eyes, but yet she was smiling, and holding her hands that were clasped together, as people hold them when they pray.

"Oh, mamma!" whispered Cathy, trembling from head to foot.

"Isn't it beautiful! I wish you could have seen him. It seems as if half the burden had rolled off now. Oh, my darling—he will be happy again—poor suffering soul! I took the

flute case down, took out the flute, and began to rub it—it had been so neglected, poor thing, it seemed to me that it must know of the trouble that has come to us. He looked at it, and turned his face away: then his fingers began to work, and still I never dared hope—never spoke a word. When it was all dusted, I went to put it back in its case.

“Let me see it,” he said, and I placed it in his hands. With a little effort he raised it to his lips—nearer—nearer—then I lifted his head, and he played that little air he loves so well—you heard it. Oh, blessed, blessed music!”

“In time, in time,” he said, as he gave it back—and from that moment, it seemed as if his very countenance changed. Now that he has that hope to dwell upon, *I* hope everything. We will make his life very happy, dear,” and the tears were running down her cheeks.

“There! I am better, now,” she said in a moment. “Dolly, can’t you take this child out for a walk. She has been working so hard to-day.”

I sent Cathy for her bonnet, and while she was gone, the loving wife and mother could

talk of nothing but the suffering of her husband, and the devotion of her children. Presently Cathy came in, ready to walk.





CHAPTER XII.

SAVED.

"Quick steps hurry to my side."

FOR some reason or other, although we started for the old mills, we turned into another road, and soon found ourselves marching along the highway—and presently Garcelon House stood right before us. A beautiful place it was, situated back from the road on a magnificent knoll, and was environed by the most perfectly kept garden spots, terraces and lawns. It all looked like a picture this beautiful spring morning, with the lovely, blue sky above, and the white and pink budding and blossoming trees and shrubs on every hand. Doctor Berg was just coming out of the gate as we passed.

"Good morning, good morning!" he said,

pleasantly. "How is your father this morning, Miss Cathy? I hope —" and he made his customary pause.

Cathy told him, delightedly, the little episode of which I have written.

"Played, did he! flute, eh! Well, that is very good. I did not expect it so soon. But then —" and looking down thoughtfully he was silent, till Cathy asked if any one was sick at Garcelon House.

"Only Mrs. Bride — usual complaint. Got an infernal temper, excuse me, ladies, but that, with some remoter cause, sends her into her tantrums, or fits, as they call them. She'll die in one, some day. I don't understand why Garcelon keeps such a servant — she's quite useless — but then of course, that — good morning, ladies," he added, pulling himself together as if he had thought of an important summons, and off he went.

"Mrs. Bride was Gabrielle's nurse, I suppose that's why he keeps her," I said. "She used to be most kind to us, for I was Gabrielle's play-mate, and as her husband is the gardener, of course Mr. Garcelon hates to dismiss her. I haven't seen her for a long time; I wonder if she

is altered? Everybody in the house seemed afraid of her, except Gabrielle."

"Hark!" said Cathy, "don't you hear somebody sobbing?"

Yes, the voice sounded quite near, now, and when we rounded a curve in the great wall, there sat Bony on a rock by the roadside, his dull face duller than ever, while beside him crouched a girl, her face completely hidden, for she had buried it in her hands, what part of it was not already covered by a huge, faded sun-bonnet, which bobbed with her convulsive sobs, and gave a ridiculous finish to the woe-begone picture.

"Why, Bony, what is the matter with Genie?" I asked, stopping short. It was some time since I had seen the brother and sister together.

"They was mean to her up to Garcelon House," said Bony, sullenly.

"Why, what did they do? How came you up to Garcelon House?" asked Cathy.

"Housekeeper said she might come and work there, so she was scrubbing, when that Irisher, Mistis Bride come along, and kicked over the suds and took her long of the arm, an' jest put her out, with big swear words, too;" and Bony shook his forlorn head, fiercely.

"And she hurted me," moaned the girl, rubbing her elbow, stealthily.

"What right had she to put any one out, when the housekeeper gave her work to do?" asked Cathy, indignantly.

"She hadn't no right," muttered Bony. "I'll bet she don't do it again — I'll never go into that house; I don't like it, nohow."

"By this time Genie had raised her head, showing a face as pretty as a little daisy, albeit rather smeared about the eyes and forehead, but the eyes were very bright and black.

"She needn't a hit me so," murmured the girl, "only I hain't had no work to do ever sense the mills' burnt down, and I was going to be give a shilling for scourring," and she began to sob again.

"Where do you stop, now, Genie?" I asked, for indeed I had not seen her since the fire.

"I'm stopping all round, Miss. Them as can give me a meals vittles, doe, and I scour an' scrub, and tend children, but I don't git no money, nor I won't, till the mills is built agen. Sometimes they tells me I'll have to go to the poor house, but I never will, I'll die fust; I'll never go there."

"No, Miss, we won't neither of us, never go there no more!" supplemented Bony, with a twist of the lips, and a movement of the hand that was meant for a menace.

From a little change in my pocket-book, I took a bit of money, and gave to the girl, who looked at it and at me with a surprise amounting to wonder, and a half smile stole over the pretty face.

"Poor things! how thankful they are for such a mite, and how hard they work for it! I never saw the girl before, though the boy is so well known."

"How can they be brother and sister?" asked Cathy.

I told her all I knew about Bony, which indeed was not much. He had been in the town ever since I could remember, and his history was as follows:

"One terribly stormy night, which was marked as an epoch, for the reason that several houses were blown down, and twenty persons killed, a woman was found under the church porch, insensible, a babe covered up in her shawl, and a boy, a bright, pretty, little fellow, crouching by her

side. As it was at first thought that they were sufferers by the storm, they were taken immediately in by a family near by, where it was soon found that the woman was a vagrant and a stranger, and in a sickly and starving condition. On the following morning, she was carried with her two children to the poor house, and in less than twenty-four hours, she died of exhaustion. The little girl, not yet a year old, and the boy something more than two years older, were kept by the overseers, and grew up, wards of the town. A frightful accident that happened when he was five years old, resulted in the deformity of the little fellow's face and figure, but the girl grew up tolerably pretty. No clue could be found to their parentage, they did not even know their own names, and in time the boy contracted the surname of Bonaparte, and the girl that of Genie, while an expression used towards them by an old medicant, who called them two young shucks, clung to them, and at last became the name by which they were called. And so the two forlorn children grew up, friendless and alone, until they were old enough to be apprenticed, when they found homes, such as they were, and

subsequently, when the mills were built, attempted, and with success, to work for themselves."

"Poor things!" said Cathy, with an accent of pity, "what a fate! To be cast on the world utterly friendless, and worse, even, nameless. I thought there could be no sadder trial than ours, but for these poor, neglected children, I feel such pity as I never felt before. I won't mind that boy's repulsive face again. I'm afraid he don't make many friends, poor fellow!"

"Very few. He seems almost to worship my mother, who has done him many little kindnesses, but for the majority of mankind, that part at least which he knows, I fear he has very little love."

We walked down by the ruins of the mills, eventually. All was stir and hubbub there, hammering, sawing, lifting and pushing, and scores of the old mill-hands stood round, speculating upon the work, questioning the busy toilers, laughing and joking. Mr. Garcelon was there, and seeing us, came on the outskirts of the crowd to speak to us.

I ventured to ask him how soon the mills would be finished.

"In a week or two we shall have the walls up, and in two months the place will be ready for occupation, I hope," he said. "Who is that queer looking chap? I think I used to see him at work in the mills."

Turning to where his nod indicated, there stood Bony with his sister, watching the progress of the work with absorbing interest. They had followed us, it seemed, and the boy and girl made a picture calculated to arouse the curiosity of an onlooker.

I described their position in a few words. Mr. Garcelon gazed at them, thoughtfully, particularly at the girl.

"We'll give them something to do, pretty soon," he said, and touching his hat, moved away.

"Come to look at him, he *has* got a good head," said Cathy, "and beautiful hair."

"Who?" I asked.

"That poor boy, Bony; you remember what my brother said about him. Ernst is remarkably keen in his perception of character. It seems hard those two poor children should have no one to look after them."

"It is hard; it ought not be so," I assented. "I have often thought if they were willing to learn, perhaps it is my duty to help them. I spoke to mother, but she said very little to encourage me. I know what she wants—she would like me to follow the dictates of my own judgment. The boy is sensible enough, only so uncouth and homely."

"But the girl is prepossessing; I think it would be a pleasure to teach her," said Cathy. "I could do something, Sunday afternoons."

"And so could I; it only needs the will, and the way is always easy. Besides—" I hesitated a moment, as Cathy's clear eyes looked into mine, "I think I should feel a peculiar pleasure in trying, now—I have taken a new step since I saw you last, Cathy—I'll tell you all about it when we are alone, sometime."

The words were scarcely out of my mouth, when I felt myself grasped as in a vise, a hot breath upon my face, while I was dragged bodily away before I could speak or cry out. Then a cloud of dust shut out everything—there was a fall, a heavy crash, a babel of sound, a rushing of feet, and I stood there gasping and half stunned.

The first thing that brought me to myself, was feeling the arms of Cathy about me. She was sobbing.

"Well, I allow thet's a meracle," said a harsh voice, at my right. "The thing went squar on the spot whar she stood."

"Don't be frightened, Dolly—its all over. One of the beams just lifted, fell where you stood. Something in the tackling gave way. I saw it coming, but before I could speak or move, Bony had hold of you and dragged you out of the way. Why, it would have killed you. Oh, it made me so faint and sick!"

I couldn't understand for some minutes. When I did, I turned to speak to the boy, but he had gone, and there a little way off was his sister, following him, but turning now and then, to look at me out of her queer eape bonnet. I was trembling from head to foot. The excitement was subsiding, however. One or two of the workmen came up to speak to me, but Cathy led me away, and we walked slowly home, together.

Bony, the uncouth lad and half idiot, some people called him, had saved my life. I had taken an interest in the lad before, pitying him

for his isolation in a community of christians, and deploring his ignorance. Now his needs took on a more serious aspect, and he seemed to have entered into closer relations, to have become an object of almost holy pity, as well as the savior, under God, of my life. Every call of duty seemed to give way before the necessity now laid upon me, to help this boy and his sister to a newer and higher plane of existence. With this absorbing question my mind was so occupied, that it was some time before I told my mother of the accident that came so near being fatal.

“My dear, dear child!” she said, kissing me and holding me to her heart, “I see it all now.”

“What do you mean, mother?” I asked, for her face had taken on the tenderly, solemn look, which I had learned to know betokened great intensity of feeling,

“I will tell you,” she said, with another kiss. “It was perhaps an hour ago, that a shadow came over me so dark and dense, that I could not work. The very sun seemed dull and gray,—I looked in on Harry, but he was busy and happy with his painting—I thought of Dick at school—I thought of you and your father, and my heart grew

heavier and heavier. Then I prayed God to take this darkness from me; what it meant I knew not, only that there was trouble somewhere, threatening our peace and happiness. All at once as I prayed, the cloud lifted, and I have been singing and sewing ever since, quite sure that our Father would avert any threatened danger. How can we ever thank him sufficiently for this signal act of mercy?"

So we conferred together that night about poor Bony, and how it was best to proceed in the task of enlightening him.

"It will be no small effort," said mother, as we discussed this plan and that. "This poor lad has had no training—he can hardly know the meaning of the words love or gratitude, for he has been held to be a castaway, from his first coming amongst us. Strangers have taxed and harrowed him—his inherent rights have been disregarded—he has had no relations with men save those of submission and force. Consequently his intelligence must be more or less brutish. Still, with God all things are possible, and we must look to Him for the patience and skill which is needed for the mending of only one broken life.

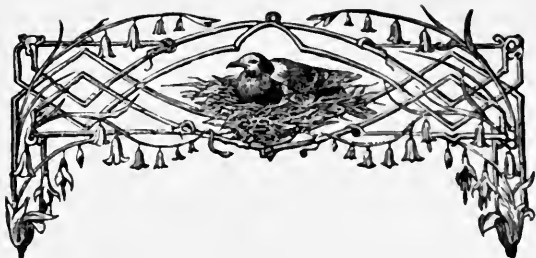
You may be sure that your father and I will help you all we can, and in time we shall see a great change—for ever so little light in a human, benighted soul, constitutes a great change—in poor Bony and his sister.”

I went up to my room with a swelling heart and full of high resolves. To act the part of the good Samaritan, to bring a soul, bruised and bleeding and in midnight darkness, to the knowledge of my Prince and Saviour! would it indeed be given me to do this wonderful thing? I could at least begin, for education is a life work, and every day needs and brings a master.

Afterwards I found that all the town was talking about Bony, and then it got into the papers, though we only knew that through a letter which Cathy received from Ernst:

“I hear your fair, little friend, and next door neighbor, was saved from a terrible death, by the boy who was working for you when I was down home. It requires something more than mere courage to do a deed like that. if you remember, I liked the boy; I always did form sudden attachments, and my insight never played me false yet.”

This part of the letter, Cathy read to me.



CHAPTER XIII.

HELEN AT CASTLE BROOK.

"Say is this life? How trifling, oh, how vain!"

HELEN had now been at Castle Brook nearly two weeks, and already her pale cheeks had gathered a delicate, pink hue, like the fine tinting of coral. The summons that found her lonely and sad in her little tower room in the old seminary, had sent a thrill of delight through all her frame. To feel that some one remembered her in her forced seclusion, was a delight rarely experienced, for she was almost alone in the world. Away she went, humming in an undertone, down the tiresome stairs and into the principal's room, where madam sat in a high-backed, arm chair, very much carved and very yellow from time.

"You wish to go, then," says madam, straightening herself, and piercing Helen with her small black eyes.

"Very much, madam ; they are all my friends, there," says Helen, with a far away expression in her eyes.

"Ah! you *have friends*, then," says madam, with a sharp emphasis on the word.

"I have been there before," said Helen; a vivid red suffusing her pale cheeks.

"Oh, of course ; I see you have made up your mind to go, and I shall say nothing against it. But I should not be doing my duty, if I did not warn you. I have no personal knowledge of the people at Castle Brook, but I have heard of them, often. They are a precious set of care-for-naughts, holding our blessed religion in contempt, and indeed all things that are called religious. The pleasures of the body, and not the good of the soul, are all they live for. I don't know that they worship fire or practice incantations and sorcery — they are, I am afraid, worse than that — they worship themselves, if indeed they have any faculty of the kind, and live utterly regardless of another and better life;" and the good woman,

having done her duty, signified that Helen might depart.

The young girl took the lesson somewhat to heart, but it did not influence her decision. She remembered that when she was there before, they had family prayers at Castle Brook, and as the Sundays were fearfully stormy, she had no opportunity of knowing the character of their holy-day observances. She remembered also, that it had never before fallen to her lot to live in such an atmosphere of gentleness and refinement. The kind old General, the lady-like mistress of the house, Baron, (and at the thought of his considerateness and delicate attentions, her face flushed again,) impulsive Jack, bright and sweet as a fresh morning-glory, all passed in review before her, and her heart saw no fault in any of them. She took a glance at her small stock of laces and ribbons, mended some and brightened others, declaring to herself that she would not be cheated out of the sweetest of idyllic pleasures, simply because she could neither vie with nor outshine her kind entertainers. So with her head full of beautiful country pictures, lawns, copses, winding roads, singing waterfalls, rustic arbors,

rivers, pavilions, vines, trees and flowers, she went to sleep that night, dreams doubling her pleasure, for in them she met with a glorious welcome at Castle Brook, a delightful prelude to the reality of which a few brief hours brought her.

They all came to meet her at the turn of the road, Gabrielle and Jack, locked arm in arm, Baron, gravely kind, and the General, who was going further on to inspect a field of barley. And it seemed so natural to take Baron's arm, and look up to him, for he was a tall, well-knit, young man, that Helen forgot all the dreary past, and felt herself one of this little world that was so beautiful to her.

And then the three girls were alone together in Jack's room; and Jack showed Helen a little closet that had been fitted like an alcove for a bed.

"Gabrielle said you would be so much more at home here, than in our guest chamber, that I had this arranged for you," said Jack.

"It's just delightful," was Helen's comment, turning partly round, for she was kneeling over her poor, little, black trunk, and shaking out her one silk dress that was to play its part on grand occasions.

“Better than that bare room at the Seminary,” said Gabrielle.

“Yes, but that is not so bad,” said Helen, “though the outlook is rather dispiriting. To one who has no real home, any shelter is a godsend, you know.”

“How strange!” said Jack, “I can’t even imagine how it would seem not to have mother or father to go to—and dear old Brook to come home to—wouldn’t it be lovely, now, to have a home of your own?”

Helen was brushing her beautiful, long hair, and she only laughed in reply, but such a sob came surging up in her throat, albeit she felt her face grow fever hot. The question brought up so much that was pitiful in her past life, for she had always been meanly housed, and had seen both father and mother slowly fade out of life for want of but a tithe of the comforts that ordinary households obtain, that for a minute she was overcome by the remembrance.

No one noticed, Jack least of all, how the thoughtless question sent the tears rushing into her eyes. Gabrielle began talking about a letter from home, and then the time was given up

to recreation. The spirit of fun and jollity abounded, and the house was kept like a rose garden, fair, sweet and bright, with the daily presence of the three girls. Baron entered into all their sports, and constituted himself general in chief of the executive force, now marshalled at Castle Brook. He planned moonlight excursions on the river, delightful picnics to the surrounding woods, and glorious, somber woods they were, with only here and there a shadeless open, brightened with mosses and wild flowers, with the sunlight braided in. Now and then a few invitations were sent out among the neighboring families, and they had outdoor games for the afternoon, tea after that, and impromptu amusements for the evening.

"Helen's ideas are so far ahead of ours," said Jack, laughing, as one of these unique entertainments was under discussion; "what do you think she wants for a tableau?"

"What is it?" asked Gabrielle, looking up from a tablet on which she was writing.

"Why, St. Paul on Mars Hill; a reproduction of the picture you so much admired yesterday."

"Isn't it a noble subject?" asked Helen,

“and then the draperies can be so skillfully managed.”

“You see she is so good!” said Jack, lightly. “Her mind is constantly exercised upon scripture and scriptural themes. Tap it any time, and out runs a text. By-and-by, she will be wanting to represent — ”

“Who?” asked Helen, looking up again from her book, a wonder in her face.

“Christ on the Mount,” said Jack, with a low, gurgling laugh. “You see I am up to scripture, too.”

“Oh, Jack!” cried Helen, with a pained expression.

“Why, what have I done?” asked Jack, in the same light, off-hand manner.

“You have insulted the name of my Saviour,” said Helen, “you forget who it is you speak of in such a flippant way. If a friend of yours had died in his attempt to do you a service, I think the name of that friend would be sacred from all profane suggestion, forever after.”

“Profane! dear me!” and Jack looked her wonder. “I didn’t dream of being profane. Did I swear, or anything like it, Gabrielle? I’m sure

I didn't mean to offend you, Helen. I merely spoke of the matter as I have heard it spoken of. Baron, you know, don't believe as most people do, and I suppose his example influences me more or less."

"What is it that Baron don't believe?" asked Helen, turning a little aside, as if to get more light on the page she was reading.

Gabrielle looked warningly over to Jack, but the girl was perverse, and would not heed her.

"He don't believe either in Christ or the Bible," said Jack, in her downright way; "and find me a better or nobler man, than my brother Baron, if you can. Why, Helen! how can you possibly care? you're as pale as a ghost," cried Jack, the next moment.

Helen rose, sat down again, rose, and then, almost gasping for breath, left the room.

"Why, Jack! what have you done?" asked Gabrielle, in consternation.

"Opened her eyes," said Jack, bluntly. "She's got to know. I had no idea she was such a tremendous Christian. She believes every word in the Bible from a to izzard, just like the blind bigots that Baron talks of, who blighted every-

thing bright and beautiful, and taught people to be formal and wretched and unhappy, and expect to go to hell if they were not eternally praying and moping."

"Why, Jack!" said Gabrielle, looking the disappointment and surprise she felt, "I never knew you to talk in this strain before. If Helen is a Christian, surely she is a happy one. She never refuses to take part in our little entertainments; indeed was ever any one brighter and more merry than she? I don't understand you, dear; there seemed to be a spite in what you said, and surely you made poor Baron out blacker than he is."

"I know it—and yet I don't know," said Jack, with her characteristic impulsiveness. "I don't see any fault in him. I won't—and yet if she is right, and people generally are considered right, who worship Christ and stand up for the Bible, where is Baron? where am I? I've been reading some of those books," and she bent her head toward the next room, where Baron had his studio, "they are under lock and key, you know, while Helen is here, but I have found them at odd times, and you can't tell how interesting and truthful they seem, and what fine reasoning they

hold. They teach that man is a slave to creeds and beliefs, and indeed they seem to prove that the Bible is no more sacred than — ”

“Jack, I won’t listen!” said Gabrielle, indignantly. “I won’t, indeed — why do you read those books? you never did before Helen came.”

“Because Helen has set me to thinking,” said Jack, evidently delighted at the sensation she had so thoughtlessly created, “she is such a bigot!”

“Helen never talks about religion,” said Gabrielle. “There is nothing of the bigot about her.”

“Oh, yes, she talks, if you ask her questions, and talks mighty plain, too; she is entirely given up to an idea. How does she *know* the things she believes? She is merely taking the opinions of others on trust. The absurd idea that if you only have faith in something or some one you never saw, you are saved — the feeling that you must never consult your own interests or wishes — why that is being hampered all one’s life — that is slavery, and as Baron’s books say, there is not a more senseless bondage, a more complete serfdom to a myth.”

“Well, Jack!” exclaimed Gabrielle, drawing a long breath, “you have employed your time to some purpose if you have only lately begun to read infidel books. I wouldn’t look at them — unless I had had some experience the other way, or until my judgment was more matured. Helen has a splendid intellect, and I remember once when she had some terrible doubts, how thoroughly miserable she was, until at last, she said, there was no other way for her but to believe like a little child, and that it was better for her to have a blind faith, than to raise her puny hand against the Almighty. Since that time — and she never spoke of it afterwards — she has been just as happy as a child, and her devotion has been a beautiful one to me. I think it would be better for you to study her than those wicked books that give neither help nor happiness.”

“Do you consider Baron a wicked man?” asked Jack, hotly.

“I never saw anything in him but the utmost gentleness and sweetness of temper,” said Gabrielle. “I know you worship him, and naturally follow in his footsteps, but — ”

“Well, but what?” asked Jack, as Gabrielle hesitated, “there’s always a but.”

"I was going to say that those were natural gifts. Baron has been highly favored; he has never had any trials or disappointments; he don't know what trouble is—therefore he has never been sufficiently tested in order that it might be seen what influence his peculiar belief might have upon him."

"Why, you talk like a person of experience," said Jack. "I guess you have been taking lessons of Helen."

"And you talk like one with a personal grievance. I wish I had not thought of asking Helen here."

"So do I," said Jack, curtly, and throwing aside her work, burst into tears, sobbing almost convulsively.

"Why, Jack, dear, what can be the matter?" asked Gabrielle, now thoroughly alarmed.

"Nothing," said Jack, defiantly, and then after a moment, she raised her head, a pitiful sight, for her features were convulsed, and the tears rained down her cheeks.

"Oh, don't you see how it is? *can't* you see?" she cried, chokingly. "I love Helen—I can't help it, love her at times, dearly, and then at

times I almost hate her. Can't you see what Baron thinks of her? how he is bound up in her. When she first came here I saw that—and she will just set her foot on his heart."

"How do you know that?" asked Gabrielle.

"Because I do know it. I have sounded her in such a way that she could not possibly see my drift—and she would rather die to-morrow than change her religious belief."

"Yes, I believe she would; she ought to," said Gabrielle. "But then Baron would never ask her to relinquish her religion."

"No! the glorious fellow!" said Jack, a burst of pride lighting up her stained, sorrowful features, "that he would not—*his* mind is not narrow, he would never seek to force his convictions upon another, but Helen—I have learned this much, Helen would never marry a man whose religious opinions differed from her own. She has such high, romantic notions, that there should be a oneness in belief as well as in other matters, and she will treat Baron as no brother of mine deserves to be treated," and the tears fell plentifully again. "That is why I am beginning to hate her."

“But perhaps Baron will love her sufficiently to think with her, to see that there never can be any real harmony between two persons, unless there is unity in their religious sentiments.”

“How can a man like Baron give up his settled convictions?” queried Jack, with a doleful shake of the head. “You must remember he is no boy, he is over thirty years old. And besides he is preparing a series of lectures on modern Atheism, which he is to deliver at some popular club this winter.”

“That settles it then,” said Gabrielle.

“You mean that when Helen hears that, she will never think of Baron again, though she must see what he thinks of her, aye, and love him, too.”

“Yes. I think that is exactly what I mean. I know Helen so well.”

“She is self-willed, opinionated, and a fanatic,” said Jack, and turning, marched out of the room, leaving Gabrielle deep in thought, and unsatisfied for the first time since she had come to Castle Brook. The spirit of antagonism had entered this modern Eden, and brought with it a blight that seemed benumbing. The girl had never troubled herself to think very seriously on

matters so vital to the soul's well being. She had admired Helen's character, her forbearance under injuries, her readiness to do things which seem to most people beneath their dignity. She had seen her in the sick room, quiet, cheerful and efficient, and once, when a case of small-pox broke out in the Seminary, Helen was the only one who could be found willing to take any care of the patient. And yet she knew that Helen had a quick temper, and a subtle sense of and delight in all the refinements of life, that she loathed anything repulsive or contaminating. Hence she was forced to conclude that there was intrinsic worth in the methods that led Helen to sacrifice her own individual tastes and preferences, and imbued her with cheerfulness to perform repulsive tasks for the sake of others.

All this had its effect upon Gabrielle, though she had never given it much serious thought, but when the time came in which the touchstone was to be applied to her own weak and halting faith, it saved her from the contamination of liberal or infidel principles, and even from a wish to peruse such books as the spiritually blind, halt and lame, have left behind them.



CHAPTER XIV.

THROUGH THE WOODS TO CHURCH.

“ Until he hated man, himself and God.”

THE first Sunday had been too tempestuous to allow of any one leaving the house, but on the second, the sun shone with a rarely vivid lustre, the fields smiled in the glory of their vernal brightness, and from every tree-top poured forth a flood of melody. Heaven and earth rejoiced in the smile of their Creator, in the vernal beauty of their summer glory. Three days had passed since the outbreak by which Jack relieved her mind, and matters had gone on as usual, except the St. Paul picture had been given up.

“What a splendid day for the woods!” said Baron, at breakfast. “How cool and quiet that southern slope over by the Biglow rocks will be!”

"Let's have a lunch there," said Jack; "we can set the table under the big beech, and Morris will carry the things."

"Leave me out of your calculations, children," said the General, who had been carrying on an animated conversation with Helen. "I am going to take Miss Helen to church. I hope Pangloss will have a good sermon; he is sometimes rather prosy."

Baron bit his lip and changed color. Helen only smiled over the table to Gabrielle, and Jack said, with the slightest possible tinge of sarcasm in her voice,

"I forgot that Helen considers it irreligious to go in the woods on Sunday."

"Oh, no!" said Helen, deprecatingly. "You judge me wrongly. I like every tree in the woods. Do we not pass through them on our way to church? I think you told me so, General."

"Certainly; there is a carriage road right through the heart of our woods, and a very pleasant drive," was the answer.

"Couldn't we walk?"

"Not both ways. You can have your choice, the carriage going or returning."

"Going, then," said Baron.

Jack dropped her tea-spoon, and looked at Baron, enquiringly; but just then Mrs. Leon arose, and all left the table. Baron went out and came in again a moment after.

"We are going to have the long team," he said, as he handed a lovely tea-bud to Helen, and a more mature flower to Gabrielle. The long team was the largest carriage in the place, in which six or seven could ride comfortably. "I think," he added, "we shall astonish the natives! Wonderful to relate, mother declares she will go to church. Poor little Pangloss will think an eruption has taken place, and we are all belched forth from the family crater. So get ready, girls," he added, as he left the room.

"That's too bad," said Jack, "when I had set my heart on a wood's lunch. I know what I'll do; I'm not to be cheated out of it. Morris shall carry up a lunch, at any rate, and on our way home we can stop. That won't hurt your conscience, will it, Helen?"

"Why, certainly not," said Helen. "I think, on the contrary, it would be very delightful. It is only exchanging the prosy surroundings of the dining room for the poetry of the woods.

"Helen," said Jack, kissing her, "you are a darling. I believe I begin to understand you."

"Pray, what can she mean?" asked Helen of Gabrielle, as Jack went out of the room.

"She thought you were a Puritan of the Puritans, in your religious views, I suppose," said Gabrielle.

"Well, so I am," said Helen, smiling. "A Puritan of the Puritans. I believe exactly as they did. But do you really think Mr. Baron Lyle was in earnest when he spoke of spending the whole day in the woods?"

"That has been their custom," said Gabrielle.

"Is there trouble between them and the clergyman? Don't they like Mr. Pangloss?"

"They don't care about church at all," said Gabrielle; "there is no special feeling against Mr. Pangloss that I know of. They only believe in worshipping God in a more primitive fashion."

"But do they worship Him?" asked Helen; "because there may be just as much sincerity under the arch of a tree as under the arch of a temple."

"Well," said Gabrielle, reflectively, "I can't tell what they think, you know; they stroll about

and pick wild flowers, and read newspapers and novels, and sing songs, and eat and sleep; that is, the General does. He often throws his handkerchief over his head, and takes a nap on some mossy knoll. And Baron often brings his pencils or his colors, and sketches. Such rare bits of pictures as he makes, 'Sunlight under the Pines,' 'The Rabbit's Home,' — cloud and tree pictures, — and bits of moss, and now and then some beautiful wild flower. We do have good times, and occasionally Baron pretends to preach, and harangues us; but I assure you his texts are not taken from the Bible, or his theology, either."

"And they call that worship?" queried Helen, gravely.

"And now I am at the confessional, I may as well state, further, that once or twice we have acted a comedy. It was great fun, but not a bit like Sunday."

"Oh!" said Helen, quietly, and Gabrielle thought a look of strange determination, blended with pain, came into her face. She glanced at the clock on the bracket over the mantel piece, and said that it was time to go to church; so Ga-

brielle ran up stairs to finish her preparation, and Helen went to her own room.

Bartonville Church was a handsome Gothic building, erected some forty years before by the father of General Leon. It stood embosomed among trees and beautiful shrubs, only the gray ivy covered porch visible from the long avenue in front. It was made of substantial stone, and presented very much the appearance of an old English church outside of London, save that its interior was more cheerful, for the sun shone through richly tinted windows, and sent long shafts of color athwart the marble aisles, giving an expression to the place like that which lights up a stately and somber countenance, that is taken possession of by a radiant smile, once seen never to be forgotten.

The pews were rather large, and that of General Leon was furnished with chairs and rugs. Down into this enclosure the preacher could look, but no one else; and it was with a curious sense of isolation that Helen took her seat.

"It is this that makes it so dull for them," she said to herself. "It is quite like the convent system; no intercommunication with others,

even by the eye. It does seem, indeed, as if we were being preached to, exclusively."

The minister was a bright-eyed, bald-headed man, who gave one the appearance, in the pulpit, of being very small. His delivery was poor,—he jerked his sentences out with little regard for smoothness of method, but his manner was sincere, and he launched out all his eloquence at the square pew. He preached at it, read at it, prayed at it. Helen settled herself comfortably, with her eyes on the floor. It was rather odd to find him gesticulating at her, hurling his sentences directly into her face, she being first the sinner, then the saint, first the believer, then the unbeliever, and in all cases the audience.

The reverend Mr. Pangloss was not conscious of this habit of his. It is even doubtful if he saw Jack half hiding an interesting book under her mantle, and reading in an unconcerned manner, or the old General, nodding now and then, or Baron, with his skeptical eyes and clouded countenance, or Mrs. Leon, whose vacant expression told to Gabrielle, at least, that her thoughts were elsewhere. His sermon was very direct, simple and logical, and the closing part, at least,

seemed to rivet the attention of both Baron and the General. The text was, "They looked on Him and were lightened, and their faces were not ashamed."

"Now," he said, gazing sternly at Helen, who just then lifted her eyes, "there are two classes of persons to whom the light in Jesus Christ comes differently. One class is *enlightened*, and the other *lightened*, or *unburdened*. One class is merely intellectually edified or instructed; the other, spiritually edified, or refreshed. To be *lightened* is to be *unburdened*. Things are twice as heavy in the dark. When one is stumbling in the darkness anywhere, any extra weight is a double burden; nay, darkness itself is a burden to one suddenly awakened in the night.

"To be mentally enlightened," and here he leaned over on his hands, and peered directly into Helen's face, "requires only an ordinary process of mental energy, but to be spiritually enlightened requires not only to understand and grasp with the mind, but to grasp with the heart.

"The darkness of this world is not only its night and shadow, its problems and mysteries, its questions and philosophies. The real darkness

of the world is its pains and sorrows unexplained; the heart bowed down and nearly broken with secret grief, home trouble, business trouble, social trouble, misunderstandings, severed friendships, the worry of unsettled matters — the conscience-smittings, all these gather, like clouds, over the fair lights of life, and hence we see so many gloomy faces. Some cannot laugh with such a load on the heart.

“‘They looked on him and were lightened’ — whoever they were who had found peace with God.”

Here Jack dropped her book on Gabrielle’s toes, and a little subdued commotion followed.

“They looked on Jesus, the friend of sinners,” continued the minister, now pointing squarely into the pew, “they looked on Him in His word, in His church; they looked on Him bleeding for their transgressions, dying for their sins, rising for their justification, ascending for their redemption and intercession; and God sent light into their souls, and they rested, and were lightened by His light. Their burdens fell away, and they saw God’s smiling face through tears. The new song came and broke forth in praise; the dawn of

heaven's glory began to rise on their soul's vision, and the night of the world's trouble fled away, like clouds before the sun."

With a side glance, Helen could see that Baron seemed interested. His handsome face was aglow, and the profile against the window in the pew, looked clear and clean cut as a cameo, while his fine eyes were dark and deep with thought and feeling. The girl's heart fluttered with pleasure—he was listening—would not some sweet word penetrate the armor of unbelief and give him back his lost faith?

"The prodigal looks to Jesus, and is lightened," continued the preacher. "Another helps him to carry the load of his heavy heart, and casts the bright beams of His light along the way.

"A youth once sought to climb into the rigging of a fast-sailing ship. When far aloft he happened to cast his eyes below, and the sickness and dizziness of fear seized him.

"'I shall fall—I am falling!' he cried in terror.

"The captain stood by, and shouting, answered: 'look up, my lad, look up!' He looked up, and came down to the deck in safety.

"No one was ever yet saved by looking down from a high purpose or resolve. Such a look makes a man dizzy with desire to get back to his old level again. Look up! look up! while you are going towards heaven!

"Such a look as faith and penitence can give, is better than all the towers that impiety and intellectual pride can build. They who built the tower of Babel would escape the rising floods. They made an upward work, and spent just so many years in waste and vanity. *So no merely human progress, with an upward tendency, seeking to supersede and overreach God's plan, can succeed;* while one look of love and contrite faith, will build a Jacob's ladder, reaching from earth to heaven, on which God's angels will come and go, bringing peace, yea, even though the weary heart and tired head rest upon a stone — on the hard and painful trials of a broken life."

Helen forgot to watch Baron, for her own spirit seemed to soar with the theme. The General moved uneasily; Jack looked pulpit-ward, nervously, and shut her book; Mrs. Leon started from a light cat-nap, and Gabrielle yawned behind her fan, as the preacher closed earnestly with the last part of his text.

“ ‘ *Their faces were not ashamed.* ’ ”

“ When sin is gone, and the load is gone, and the fear is gone, and the Saviour’s arms fold the returning child to a warm embrace of forgiving love, and the two faces meet, the Father’s face and thine, will not the shame be gone, too? True love kills shame. Divine love has no shame to kill. Shall it be said of us, beloved,

“ ‘ They looked on him and were lightened, and their faces were not ashamed? ’ ”





CHAPTER XV.

HELEN'S DECISION.

"To be most happy or most miserable."

BARON and Helen decided to walk home; the rest entered the carriage. The minister came out just as they were driving off, and spoke to them with a beaming face. I think the sermon had done him — and others — more good from the fact of the family of Castle Brook having been there.

It was so unusual, that the minister counted upon it as a new departure, and pleased himself when alone in his study, by running over parts of his discourse, and hoping that they had touched some vulnerable spot in the hearts that he had had under his earnest instruction for one brief hour.

"I think, my dear, I made it pretty plain to them," he said to his wife.

Mrs. Pangloss was an invalid, a little, wizen-faced woman, with an immense crop of whity-yellow hair, who sat all day long in a great, calico-covered arm-chair, and whose only pleasure in life consisted in the ability of pouring all her complaints into the ear of a too indulgent husband.

"Pray who are you talking about, Mr. Pangloss—and please don't speak so loud, it goes through my head like a gong."

"I was alluding to the Leons of Castle Brook, my dear."

"Pray don't follow that foolish usage, but say Brook House; why castle, pray?"

"Surely," said the minister, good naturedly, "why castle? Brook House is better—only everybody calls it so."

"What did they come to church for? I thought they were all infidels and atheists? That's the character they've got," said the minister's wife, playing with her cap strings, with fingers white and small, like those of a child.

"Well, I trust they're not so bad as that. It's only the son who has gone wrong; a fine-appear-

ing fellow as ever was. Don't you remember when we first came here he was in your class, and you thought him a boy of uncommon promise?"

"Yes, I do. Nobody knew his catechism better than little Baron, and his head was fairly crammed with texts. I remember I gave him a prize, once—I think he recited one hundred and forty verses out of the new Testament. Then I was taken sick—there came in all the trouble. Patty Nailor took my class, and managed badly. If I could have kept that boy, I would have trained him right. He never would have gone astray. Patty was giddy and thoughtless—I would have kept him up to his duty."

"Let us hope we can win him back," said the minister, thoughtfully.

Meanwhile, Helen and Baron walked on arm in arm. The scene around them was very beautiful; green, sun-lighted avenues, stretching in every direction, yet plenty of shade, such soft, tremulous shadows, as played all over the thick moss, under grand old trees! They had said but little to each other at first, but as the time went on, they talked of the sermon, and of the beauty of the day, and gradually, of more engrossing themes.

Was it not strange, that as they drew near the place where the servant at Castle Brook had been instructed to bring lunch, they made their appearance, he with a set, white face, and she quiet and downcast and pale, though trying to preserve an unchanged countenance.

The lunch was shorn of all its rustie beauty. Jack looked frowingly from one to the other, and Gabrielle felt that something of graver importance than appeared on the surface, had happened. Baron laughed and talked in a strained, unnatural voice, at every effort made by the two girls to penetrate the reason for a change so strikingly apparent, and as soon as the lunch was over, strode off in gloomy silence, and alone, toward the house.

Mrs. Leon thought it was damp; and Helen immediately offered to return home with her, while the old General ‘poo-pooing’ the idea, sought his favorite nook to sleep, and threw his handkerchief over his head.

“*Now*, what has happened?” asked Jack, as she deftly removed the china ware from the white cloth, and shook the latter on the grass. “Do you know what I think?” she added, wrathfully.

"I think Baron proposed to her, and she refused him, on account of her ridiculously fanatical notions. Such a man as our Baron, too! she might think herself honored," she cried, folding the fine linen vehemently into shape. "If I find it is so, I shall despise and hate her all my days, just as heartily as I loved and respected her before. The idea! refused my brother Baron! I can tell her she won't find another such a man — or family, for the matter of that," continued Jack, throwing the mass of smooth white cloth at her feet.

"Wait till you know, dear Jack," said Gabrielle.

"Know! why it's easy enough to see, isn't it? That ridiculous sermon did the business. I wish I had staid at home."

"*You* didn't hear the sermon, at all events," said Gabrielle, laughing.

"Didn't I! I heard it, but it went in one ear and out of the other. I don't believe mother or father, or even you, can repeat one word of it. But Helen can — Helen will begin with the text, and finish at amen. That's all she thinks of, because it's for *her* pleasure and convenience.

They got talking of it, I know, coming home — then Baron dared to disagree with her, for you know how outspoken he is, and I'll venture that there was a regular pitched battle. I hope Baron didn't yield — I know he didn't — he couldn't, because he's just as honest in his convictions as she is in hers. Oh, dear, how I do hate all religious cant and controversy! But I tell you what, if she has refused him, she'll be sorry to her dying day. It will only drive him to extremes, and she might have made another man of him — that's if she wanted to — I wouldn't — if she *had* married him."

Gabrielle did not feel herself able to discuss the question. She liked Baron, and Helen was her dearest friend; hence she could not denounce the latter for any supposed fault. All she knew of her, tended to convince her own mind that duty was more to Helen than the pomps and vanities of any alliance she could make, more to her than even her own happiness. She knew that Helen was capable of any amount of self-sacrifice.

She was also sure that Helen would confide in her to some extent — she always had. As for Baron, she pitied and blamed him. Jack's high

flown laudation of her idol, had never transformed him in the least in her imagination. The fact that he rejected all revealed religion, was to her well-balanced mind, an enormity without a name. A man without a belief in God, seemed to her an anomaly. She could even imagine him descending so low in the scale of respectability at some time, as to be guilty of the grossest crimes. She was sure she would never dare to marry such a one, not even if he were as handsome, intellectual, rich and well descended as Baron Leon. She found herself feeling a sort of pride in Helen, that she had thus asserted her individuality.

“Of the two,” she said to herself, “the man ought to be the most firmly grounded in religious belief, for he has the ship to guide, and all the outside affairs of the family in his hands.”

Finally she wrought herself up to quite an enthusiastic pitch of admiration for her friend. Nobody knew the dear girl as well as she did — how her religion sanctified all the little details of her daily life — how firm she was in friendship, how unselfish and loving. If ever a girl wanted a home, Helen did; if ever a girl was encompassed and impressed by the galling circum-

stances of poverty, Helen was. All her tastes were exquisite. It was like a pang of sharp pain to her, to wear and ill-fitting, much-mended glove, or shoes whose shapely beauty had departed. She had once caught her at the work of mending an old glove, and the tears were falling upon it, though she laughed them away the next moment. And then her beauty was of that character that it became more refined and imposing, when well arrayed in soft tints and becoming lustres.

Such a connection, with such a family, as Jack had hinted, would indeed confer upon Helen a thousand graces to add to her loveliness. She would be mistress of a splendid home, and call many rolling acres her own. The General and his wife would dote upon her, once their daughter-in-law, and Jack would be the most affectionate of sisters. Gabrielle, as she thought of all these things, half wondered at herself, for cherishing a consciousness that Helen would forego all these advantages for the sake of Christ, and yet she was confident of her fidelity.



CHAPTER XVI.

JACK'S PLEA.

"The open leaves of cold philosophy."

THEY were very dull that evening. Baron stalked back and forth in the shadows at the far end of the great parlor, with folded arms and brow gloomy with thought. Jack and Grbrielle sang together at the organ, and Helen sat, her sweet face motionless, in the strong moonlight at the south window.

Once or twice, as Gabrielle glanced toward her, she thought of her as a beautiful, calm saint, whose life of renunciation was already begun. Yet, it was very evident something had happened to break the bond between them, for heretofore in the three short weeks that Helen had been with them, the evenings had always found Baron by Helen's side.

She was not astonished, therefore, when they went up stairs together, to hear Helen announce that she should go home on the morrow — home meaning the Seminary, where she was to begin her round of teaching and guiding, which she had marked out for herself long before.

Jack sat on a comfortable foot-stool, lazily unbuttoning her boots. Over her face went quick flashes, for an impulsive temperament changed the rapid currents of her blood more readily than in older and more conventional natures.

“So you’re tired of us!” said Jack, looking sideways, and throwing her boots on the rug with a peevish gesture.

“Oh, no, dear,” said Helen, sweetly, but with a sad ring in her voice, “you know that cannot be — but term will soon commence, and I might as well be at my post — there are so many things to do, for preparation.”

“Oh, yes, and you are so fond of that place! It must be nice — up at four in the morning — an ice bath in winter, a hot bath in summer — breakfast at six, and such delicious coffee! — Gabrielle has told me all about it — the unsmiling teachers,

all of them saints and angels—in carved stone—the lovely children, all of them cherubs—what a heavenly life it must be! I quite envy you.”

“You know you don’t envy me at all,” said Helen, quietly, though Gabrielle knew from the inflection of her voice, how deeply Jack’s irony wounded her heart.

“Well, I think you’re such a fool, to stay there,” said Jack, bluntly. “You know you’ve no need, you know you and Baron have quarrelled, you know you’re unreasonable and bigoted—there now, it’s out. You see I *can* be impolite and unlady like—but then I’m only a girl, and Baron—he’s my dearest, dearest brother—and I hate any one who ill-treats him.”

Gabrielle turned round to her with a warning glance, too late. Helen had left the mirror where she was combing her hair, as if compelled by pain or faintness, and sank upon a chair near by. Every vestige of color had fled from her cheek, and her eyes looked strangely large and glittering, as if she were hunted by some unrelenting foe and could not escape.

“What are you saying, Jack, do you know? and how it hurts me? There is no place on earth

so much like Paradise, so 'heavenly,' as you say, as this dear house and its 'surroundings; you know it must be so. As to your charge that I have quarrelled with Baron, it is unkind. We exchanged ideas to-day — and we found that we differed essentially upon some important subjects. It was very painful to me, and perhaps, quite as painful to him, but — we —" her voice shook a little — "we parted friends."

"Oh, Helen!" and Jack dashed herself down at her feet, and caught her hands in an agony of appeal, which, if it had not been Jack, with her rashly impulsive nature, would have seemed like a bit of melodrama — "there's no use in hinting anything — I can't hint, I never could. Nature has given me no half-way impulses; I must say what I think, or die. Oh, Helen, why couldn't you have humored him? There's no use in denying it, Baron will never see any one he so likes and respects as he does you, has done so for a year, more than a year. It's not like him to forget. He had a dog once, a little, pet spaniel, a beautiful creature with brown eyes, that he loved, and that went with him wherever he went, and slept at his door. Somebody killed it — we

never knew who, and Baron made a funeral for it, just as tenderly as if it were human. He never had another favorite of the kind, never, though many a one has been offered to him. And then he had a bird, a little goldfinch, that he would let no one care for but himself. You ought to see the cage he bought for it, a little bird-palace, and we were all so careful for Baron's sake, for we knew how exclusive was his love. A new servant once opened the cage, and the little creature flew out, and some cat killed that — and the cage has hung empty ever since. Don't you see how if he sets his heart upon anything nothing can change it?"

"Indeed, I do see it," said Helen, smoothing the short, brown curls from the girl's bright eyes and brow, "and that is — the reason — I —"

"Oh, don't say it — don't say it to me. I am so fond of my brother — there are only we two, and he has been such a brother to me! It seems to me that if any one wantonly injured him, I could find it in my heart to strike that person dead."

"Oh, Jack! Jack! don't cherish such feelings," cried Helen, in terror, "they are unholy."

“You think so, perhaps, with your cold heart — no, no; your heart cannot be cold — it is only misled by the narrowness of your views — you take a one-sided view of things, and you condemn Baron, because he can’t think just as you do. You could make him think as you do, Helen, you could,” and her eyes grew like stars in their pleading light. Helen was visibly and strongly affected; she trembled from head to foot, and stopped stroking Jack’s hair.

“You don’t understand, Jack,” she said, falteringly. “I couldn’t make you understand how it is — your brother Baron, does; — and he cannot blame me.”

“And you are going to make his life a desert,” said Jack, with a sob, as she lifted herself from her knees.

“Oh, Jack, dear, don’t talk so,” said Helen, the tears rolling down her cheeks.

“Yes, you are going to make his life a desert, and harden and confirm him in what he believes, for he will have nothing else to turn to. And I — yes, you will do more harm still, for I shall go with my brother! I shall have faith in what he does, and believe in what he believes. I will hate

Christianity for your sake, for you have put it between you and Baron's love. I will, I tell you. In all the world there shall not be a more enthusiastic pupil than I—yes, I will be Baron's very mouthpiece. You might have saved us both, according to your ideas of salvation; now, again according to your ideas, you condemn us both to ruin. Never mind, then—I will go and be ruined, with Baron. If you are right—then I prefer Baron to your cold, frigid principles. I hate them."

She had said all this in a blaze of passion, whose heat seemed to envelop her, and throw strange beauty into her little, upright figure, and defiantly poised head. Helen sat like a statue, looking at her, her hands clasped, and a sort of horror clinging to her face and attitude. The little fire, still made every evening upon the hearth, for the rooms were lofty and chilly, at night, leaped and fell with fitful rhythm, now into strong and bright relief, now into chasms of shadow. Gabrielle listened, half undressed, a white shawl thrown over her shoulder, admiring Jack, in spite of the passion and perversity of her language, and wondering what effect this out-

burst would have on Helen, whose rigid posture told how fearfully she was suffering under the accumulating trials of the day.

Helen's heart was almost broken. Was there a germ of truth in what Jack said, or was this a more overwhelming temptation than any she had yet experienced? Would it be her fault if Jack threw herself into the meshes of infidelity, body and soul? The girl evinced a rich capacity for influence, either for good or evil upon all with whom she might come in contact. Helen shuddered at the thought of a girl, a woman, not only destitute of a well balanced Christian belief, but a bold advocate of infidelity and atheism. A woman without God! as well a world without light! The dark record of such a life has been written, has been read, and what a record! Aye, it has been *acted*, to the awful detriment not only of single souls, but of nations.

But what was Helen to do? She had used all her woman's wit, all her philosophy, in the conference that ensued with Baron on their long way back from church, and she knew that in argument, in learning, if not in zeal, he was infinitely her superior. She could only oppose

to his reason, the logic of the heart, the truths of experience, the power of a godly life. If these did not convince, nothing would, at least nothing within the scope of her ability. Like all intense natures, she *knew* in whom she believed. She *felt* the power of that Spirit whom Christ called "the Comforter," from day to day. She had experienced the rare rest of entire faith, in many a dangerous moment, in many a dark hour. Hungry as her heart was for affection, she would have nothing whatever to do with a merely sentimental love; she knew its value to be in comparison with the love which God gives, and permits, merely the flicker of a pale taper, while the other was the steady on-shining of the sun, still bright and warm though encompassed by the darkest clouds.

But she pitied Jack, poor, passionate, undisciplined Jack, whose very heart-ache quivered on her lips, and darkened in her eyes. She looked so like the defiant spirit that had spoken in the language of Baron, that ever memorable afternoon. She pitied herself, yes, from her own high plane of duty, she looked into the torture that now and again agonized her own soul, but which

she was privileged to carry as poor Jack was not — because she would not be — to the merey seat. And all this time Jack was waiting, greiving, yet defiant. What should she say to her?

“It is out of my power!” she exclaimed, in a sudden outburst of feeling. “Your brother put it out of my power with his own hand. It is much better so, dear Jack, can’t you see? A household divided against itself, can never be prosperous and happy. I should feel all the time like fighting his unbelief, because mine is not a passive nature, and he would be constantly anxious to combat my belief, because he is as aggressive as I am, He saw it perfectly: he thinks it is better as it is.”

“It is not better!” said Jack, angrily.

“But then what can I do?” asked Helen, softly, her beautiful eyes swimming in tears. “Would you have me deny my God? my Saviour? If Baron should give his life, to save you from deadly peril, would you dare to be false to his memory?”

Jack hid her pained face in her hands. Her turbulent spirit would not give her time to think.

“I would have you save Baron,” she said, letting her hands fall; “save him every way. According to your belief, he is in danger, and if so, then am I, for I tell you if you desert him, I will follow Baron. I would die, if you leave him, rather than believe in your God.”

“Oh, Jack, dear—how little you know what you say—how little you can appreciate my motives!” sighed Helen. “Can’t you see it will be better for Baron, if he—gives up—if everything is at an end between us? It was a beautiful dream, too beautiful to last, when—I will tell you frankly—I saw that I was more to him than a mere friend. but, as I feel towards him—it is either the giving up of my faith, or giving up the hope of domestic happiness, and I have chosen, must have chosen—the latter—there is no other way.”

“Gabrielle, you sit there like a statue,” said Jack, passionately. “Do you think Helen is right?”

“As Helen sees it, Helen is right,” said Gabrielle, half reluctantly.

Jack turned away, white to the lips, and continued her preparations for rest. Helen, feeling

helpless and heart-sore, rose and braided her beautiful, soft hair. Gabrielle silently sought her couch.

"Jack," said Helen, after a long pause, "don't go to bed angry with me. That is not the way to convince me that I am wrong."

"Jack, Helen is your guest till to-morrow," said Gabrielle, warningly.

"What difference does that make?" asked Jack. "I *am* angry, and denial would only make me a hypocrite. I hate a hypocrite as bad as I do — a Christian," she added, spitefully. Then after a moment's thought, shame overcoming her baser instincts, she said,

"Helen, I did like you so much; you are everything that is sweet and good, but for this fanaticism through which you make a martyr of my brother. I'm not going to say I am sorry for what I said, because I must have said it. While you are with us, however, I have no right to make you unhappy, though you have made Baron miserable. Why didn't you tell him," she added, vehemently, "that if he would renounce his convictions —"

"Stop, Jack," said Helen, gently, but firmly.

“I could not honor a man who would change his belief or unbelief from any motive but that of principle. That is building on the sand. Your brother feels strong in his convictions; they are like truth, to him — he is honest, and I shall always feel a strong admiration for him, because he was willing to sacrifice himself, rather than give them up. If ever he does come into the faith — and I feel sure he will,” she added, with a sweet smile, “it will be because he just as honestly feels that his present course is wrong, and that he is sinning against God by pursuing it. Now, dear, let us leave it all to that great Power who holds us in His keeping, and will do just the best for us that we need.”

“No, I won’t!” said Jack, almost harshly. “I don’t believe in a cast iron monster, who is all the time trying us, and punishing us. I told you I should go with Baron, heart and soul, and I will. But —” she gasped, with a half sob, “I’ll try very hard not to hate you.”

“That is so kind,” said Helen, smiling sadly, “I should so hate to be hated!”

“Oh, yes, you can laugh — I wonder how often poor Baron has laughed, to-night!” said Jack, ruefully.

"I hope he is peacefully asleep," said Helen, the tears coming into her eyes, and turning away, she went into her little closet.

"Then you will go — and we shall be so lonely here," said Jack, snuggling up to Gabrielle, a few minutes afterward.

"But you know you and Baron are to return home with me," Gabrielle said.

"Was I very rude to Helen?" she asked, after another silence.

"I thought you were," said Gabrielle, frankly.

"I was so miserable and unhappy! but I'll apologize to-morrow;" and she did.





CHAPTER XVII.

DOLLY'S NARRATIVE.

"Softly sweet the song is stealing."

CATHY played at the party, played beautifully. Everybody appreciated her performance, and she was surrounded by admiring spectators. I did my little part well, I think — she says I did — and we passed a very delightful evening. To describe it all, the beauty of the house, the birthday presents, and the feast, would, I fear, be simply impossible. Mother resurrected a nice dress for me out of the depths of aunt Amelia's old trunk. It was a soft lavender silk, with plenty of yellow lace — papa asked me if it wasn't *dirty*? — round the neck, sleeves and skirts. It was pretty enough when made over, and looked much more costly than it was. Cathy wore black satin,

a dress of her mother's made over for her — and we admired each other very much. Blue ribbons in her hair, and pink in mine, completed our personal adornment. I was nervous till I touched the piano, a noble instrument ; but its rich, singing tone, so different from mine or Cathy's, scattered my dread to the winds.

We did not see Miss Garcelon for some time, she was so in demand by her father's friends. Everything was ready for her when she came home, even to her dress, laid out for her on the bed in her room. But after Cathy had played, I knew that the beautiful girl making straight for the piano, was dear little Gabrielle, of old.

“ I thank you so much for your sweet music,” she said to Cathy, as her father introduced her.

“ And this used to be your little playmate, my dear,” he said turning to me.

“ Oh, yes, you are Dolly, dear, dear Dolly ! I haven't forgotten you,” she said. “ Jack, come here ;” and a bright, roguish-looking girl, with short curls, and, though very pretty, looking almost like a boy, came up, leaning on the arm of her brother, a very handsome man. These she introduced to me as her other dearest friends, Jaquiline and Mr. Baron Leon.

There must be something in a name, or else there was something more than ordinary in that brother and sister. They looked like two pictures of old times, just stepped out of their frames. Not that there was anything antiquated about them, but they had that high, bred look, which one associates with good birth. Well, we did enjoy ourselves rarely. Cathy played two or three times, so gracefully and sweetly, that I knew she must have made many friends, and Gabrielle was charming. I really believe she does like me in earnest, for every time I came across her path, she was as sweet, genial and cordial as ever.

Oh, how much I did enjoy that party! I felt more like a guest than a paid — no, not a paid performer, Mr. Garcelon only paid Cathy — than a mere pianist. Why is it that such a position seems to be humbling? I know the feeling is wrong. Cathy, who is very brave, felt it, too — but she intends to conquer it, and she will.

“It is so odd,” said Gabrielle to me, as we met near her cousin, to whom I was talking, “to see a lady play the violin. But I like it, immensely, and if she will teach me, I will try to study it

myself, and papa says it will be a help to her. How pretty and greeful she is, too! Is she going to make it a profession?"

I told her all about the situation.

"Poor thing! I hope she will succeed," she said, with a half sigh, "and make fame and money. There's a lull in the music, now—do you remember my old nurse? yes, of course you do. I have only seen her once, and I am going to steal away for a moment, and go up stairs to her. The poor thing is sick, has been confined to her room for a long time. She was always kind to me, though she is not a happy, nor I think, a very affectionate woman. Would you like to go with me? You were quite a favorite with her, and might like to renew the acquaintance. Don't you like my dear little friend Jack?" she continued, as I assented, and she linked her arm in mine.

I said that I liked her face, there was so much character in it.

"And she has force of character," said Gabrielle, gravely—I called her Gabrielle, for I saw that we two were to be on the footing of old friends, for the present, at least—"if force of

character means force of will. Does it? I'm sure I don't know. She's as good and sweet as can be, full of original ideas, and quite imbued with the notion that she is to play some important role in life—to be a great reformer, or something of that sort. I think," said Gabrielle, as if to herself, and with a sigh, "that, with her present convictions, that is a great pity, or would be, and mar perhaps the life-work of others—but here we are at old nurse's room. I have sent for some cream and cake, so that we may have a little feast together. I thought it would please her so.'

She opened the door, softly, and looked smilingly in. I noted, with some astonishment, that the room was large and furnished with a degree of elegance. There were pictures on the walls, easy chairs, standing here and there, a carpet of very bright colors, too bright, and of a figure too large to please a refined or cultivated taste, and numerous other indications such as we should attach to the idea that the person in occupation must have been of considerable consequence. Lying on a broad lounge, with immense pillows at its head, was Mrs. Bride, pale

and apparently suffering. The face had not changed so much as a long lapse of years might lead one to expect. It had still that fine, proud contour, that had made it so imposing, though the delicacy of the complexion—its pure red and white—was gone forever.

The great blue eyes sparkled, as Gabrielle taking the lead went toward her. She threw back the bright shawl that had enveloped the upper part of her person, and putting out both hands, drew Gabrielle close to her with a loving, half reverent movement.

“Oh, its good, it is to see you home again,” she said, and her voice rolled out, firm and clear as of old. “I have longed so to see your sweet face again, and to tell you how beautiful you are grown! And is that your friend? Is that the Miss Helen ye were always writing about? If it is, I’ll tell her how jealous I got to be of her.”

“Oh, no, nurse,” said Gabrielle, beckoning me to come nearer. “Can’t you guess who this is? You haven’t seen her for years—but I don’t think she has altered so much, unless to grow prettier.”

“Sure and I ought to know,” said the invalid.

“To be sure you had. You ought to remember little Dolly.”

“Dolly is it? — Dolly! yes, yes, I see the likeness, now. I thought I knew the face — but times do go by so. I’ve often thought of her and wondered why she didn’t come and see me.”

I could not tell her that as a child I had stood rather in awe of her, that her furious outbursts of temper made her a terror to all who knew her, but I murmured some apology, and Gabrielle began a playful badinage which attracted the invalid’s attention to her darling.

I could not define to myself the reason why this woman’s manner towards Gabrielle, so attracted and charmed me. There was an expression in her face when looking at her that changed its aspect, and made her seem one of the gentlest and loveliest of characters. She appeared to devour every word she said, she patted the hand she held, with such tenderness, and sometimes held it to her lips, as Gabrielle rattled on about her school life, the teachers, and how glad she was to get home, recalling a hundred little incidents of the days when a child, she flew to nurse to redress every wrong.

“And how strong and hearty you were,” said Gabrielle, “and now to find you sick on the couch like a fine lady!” She told me afterwards that the words slipped out — that she was sorry after she said it.

“And indeed I’m no fine lady,” said Mrs. Bride, “and never pretended to be — though perhaps I had a reason that —” she stopped short, looking first at Gabrielle, then at me. “No, I’ve never aspired to go beyond my betters,” she added, with a kindling of the old fire, that Gabrielle and I knew so well. “There wasn’t no need of that. I’ve had a comfortable life, and seen my heart’s wishes carried out, and I’m satisfied.” Again she lifted Gabrielle’s hand to her lips, with a beaming glance.

“Oh, well, I expect my coming home will work wonders, and you will be up and about, soon,” said Gabrielle, lightly.

Was it my fancy that she rather disliked the devotion of manner with which she seemed to inspire her old nurse.

“There’s a deal of music, down stairs, isn’t there?” asked the woman, after a second of silence.

"Yes, and very good music it is," said Gabrielle.

"And has my deary been dancing?"

"Yes, indeed, all the evening. To tell the truth, I came up here to get a little rest, as well as to see you.

"What! tired already? you shouldn't be tired till morning. Why, I'd a danced my feet off when I was young, rather than give up. But it's a long time since then," and she fell back with a sigh.

We ate a cream and a bit of cake with her, and then took our leave and went down stairs. I was so glad to be out of the room, and as in that instance of my sudden suspicion, I could not tell why. Down stairs Cathy was looking for me.

"Mr. Garcelon will have me play again," she whispered, her face all alight, "he says there are some new comers who wish to hear me, and it may be to my advantage;" so I led the way to the piano, and Cathy, now grown accustomed to the situation, quite surpassed herself.

When Mr. Garcelon, somewhat later in the evening, informed her that a gentleman connected with a famous conservatory of music,

wished to see her, and possibly to give her the advantages of that great institution, I am sure my heart went up in thankfulness to heaven, that the way to a noble, self support, was being smoothed and made easy for her inexperienced feet.

“Cathy, you are going to be a great genius,” I said. “I foresee it, and in the day to come, remember I told you so.” Cathy laughed, and put her hand on my lips.

“A great worker,” she said, “if not a great genius. I am determined with HIS help, to master every difficulty. I don’t think I have genius, but if there’s any power to be got out of hard work, I shall get it, you may be sure of that. My only trouble is, I shall have to leave mother, if I take lessons in the city. But in any case, if I leave the old way of living, I must do that. And then she is so anxious that I should succeed, it will not seem so hard for her.”



CHAPTER XVIII.

GABRIELLE'S PARTY.

"Oh, come sweet spirit, come to me."

It was pleasant to be treated as an old friend by the Garcelons; by the father as well as the daughter.

The mills were all finished, and Mr. Garcelon made father a fine offer, which at first he seemed eager to accept, but on consultation with mother, he decided to continue in his present business. The clue to his decision might be found in a little fragment of conversation, which I happened to hear—not that it was intended to be kept from my ear, though I was sitting in a distant part of the room.

"I don't want to advise you, dear," said my

mother, "only to call to mind that we were never really more prosperous than now — I don't mean altogether in outward circumstances. But we know that you are with a strictly honorable employer — not to say a word against Mr. Garcélon — he always treated you honorably. But we know where the greater part of his money comes from."

"Yes, that's true" says father, "the distillery business."

"And someday," said mother, "the money don't seem quite clean. We know what the business is — and how many souls it has ruined, and although, thank God, you have nothing to do with it, yet the money that has, comes into your hands."

"That's so! there's blood on it," said my father, "and yet Garcélon, in everything else, seems to be the soul of honor."

"Not quite, my dear: you know how he ill-treated his wife."

"Yes, that's true but very few people blame him for it. I have heard that she did nothing but drink from morning till night."

"But who put the temptation before her? — and



I don't want to advise you, Dear.



who brewed the drink? The Brocks knew her when she was a young girl, before she became Mrs. Garcelon, and a purer and more temperate creature never lived, they say. She didn't fall all at once—it was a gradual process, until at last there was no way of stopping her; and I have heard that he put her out of the house."

"Yes, it's a sad story, though pretty well hushed up in these parts," said my father.

"And since you've left the mill, someway my heart is lighter," said my mother. "I can think and work and even pray, with a clearer insight into the will of God. Look at Harry! I can hardly believe my own eyes, though I know it is an answer to believing faith. You know we must do *all* the will of God, dear, if we want to take Him at his word. Every promise is coupled with a command."

At this point Dick called me to get a collar for him, and I left the room. When I came back, mother was sitting alone, and I knew by the manner she rocked back and forth, with that peaceful, shining look on her face, singing her favorite hymn,

“Oh, for a thousand tongues to sing
My great Redeemer's praise,
The glories of my God and King,
The triumph of His grace, ”—

that my father had made his resolve, and that it met her wishes.

My mother had spoken of Harry — no wonder she said she could hardly believe her own eyes — Harry had gone on from raising his head in response to mother's untiring urging, to lifting his body to a sitting position, and then, wonderful to relate, he had positively helped himself out of bed, and now sat for a portion of the day in a great easy-chair, reading, writing, sketching and painting. He was getting flesh, withal, and his face seemed to take on some new charm with each recurring day. A wondrous delicacy of complexion and expression gave him an almost startling beauty. He was busy and happy from morning till night; with his various employments, and our good minister came at stated periods, and read and studied with him. This seemed to all the town's folks, to the doctor, and to ourselves, something little short of a miracle. Harry never referred to it without tears, and a fervent declara-

tion that it was mother's faith, mother's prayers. He believed in mother as Catholics believe in their saints. To him she was an incarnation of the beauty and purity of Heaven. Indeed one of our dearest friends was heard to say, not, I trust, profanely, that in his idea, she was only second to the Virgin Mary. So did her life out-shine upon others; without much talk about herself — no cant, never forcing her opinion upon her associates, but from an irrepressible, upspringing life-power, from the belief and strength of her living Christian faith and experience.

One day not long after this, we were surprised by a visit from Gabrielle. She came in a little flushed and heated by her walk, and it seemed as if the old relations between us were instantly renewed.

"I don't see that you change at all," she said, as mother came out of Harry's room to welcome her. "You look just as you used when Dolly and I came in from a walk or play, to get some milk, and you always gave us a plate full of your incomparable cookies. And the room — I used to think nothing in our house was half as handsome, and now it seems positively glorified, and

such charming taste! I know it's not a bit conventional, to rattle on in this way, but somehow, I can't help it."

Mamma kissed her, and insisted on her taking off her hat.

"Don't you smell the cookies, baking?" she asked.

"Yes, the minute I opened the door, I noticed it. I do believe I'll stay and take tea. Jack and her brother are gone to some convention, and won't be back till late to-night, and there's nobody at home to miss me, much — only nurse," and she half sighed. "I told her where I was going, so if I am a little late, papa will come or send for me."

She handed her hat and mantle to me, and taking her handkerchief from her pocket, a paper fell out.

"Oh!" she laughed, "there's where my learned friend Mr. Baron Leon, is going to speak, to-night. They wanted me to go, but I told them that I was quite irreligious enough without hearing such arguments as they will advance."

Mamma read the paper with some surprise.

"So your friend is a free thinker," she said.

“An out-and-out infidel ; oh, dear, Mrs. Gregory, he is so good, too!”

“That is certainly in his favor,” said my mother, with a smile, “only he is trying to work out his salvation in the wrong way. And is his sister an infidel, too?”

“Jack is anything that her brother is,” said Gabrielle.

“Which shows the power of example,” said mother, her face a little shadowed. “It troubles me more to hear that said of a woman, than a man. I don’t know why it should ; all souls are of like value before God, but a woman’s opportunities, although they seem limited, are really more far reaching, and more subtly used. But I must go and see to my baking,” and mother tied her white apron on again, and left the room.

“Oh, how happy you must be to have such a mother,” half sighed Gabrielle, following her with sad, strained eyes. “If I only could think that a mother would meet me when I go home — and kiss me ! why, a mother’s kiss must be something heavenly ! I don’t think we are half pitied enough, we motherless girls. Put yourself in my

place — in that great house, going from room to room, and no mother in any of them! No mother to go to for counsel, for advice, or for sympathy! When I have had a joyful, happy time, and everything goes smoothly — the thought that I have no mother to tell it to, takes away half the pleasure. And I am even foolish enough to this day, when I am dressed for a party, and see myself in the glass, with unappreciative eyes, to whisper,

“How do I look, mother!”

“And then I just fancy her approving me, and calling me pretty. It may be silly, but it’s harmless, and does me a world of good.”

The pathos of her voice went to my very heart.

“You must be my sister,” I said, “and then my mother will be your mother.”

“Very well — let’s seal the compact with a kiss,” was her reply. “But of course, you wouldn’t like me to call her ‘mother.’”

“If it is any comfort to you, certainly,” I said.



CHAPTER XIX.

GABRIELLE'S VISIT.

"In harmony ever blending."

WHAT a glorious afternoon it was! Nothing seemed wanting to make our felicity in each other's society, perfect. I see the vine-shaded window, now, the summer roses blooming on the outside, the white path to the garden gate, the road beyond, shaded by tall trees. I bring out my lace work, as we sit together, Gabrielle and I, and show her the stitch, and she begs me to teach her, and we bend our heads close together, and our fingers intertwine, and she laughs at my agility, and I laugh at her mistakes, and we are very merry and jolly together, feeling, at least I feel as if there was not a care or sorrow in the world. And almost

imperceptibly the conversation leads to things of the past, and she tells me many little stories of her school days—the teachers, every one of whom she photographs to the life, from the little gray-eyed girl who takes charge of the younger children, to the venerable head teacher, a woman of fine commanding presence, born to rule.

Particularly she dwelt upon one of the dearest and sweetest of her schoolmates, Helen Trevort, in whose praise she could not seem to say enough. It appears that she owes to her all the good that has been developing in her character for years past.

“She is truth and sincerity itself,” she said, “there is no affectation about her, and no selfishness, such as one meets with in most school-girls. She just seems to delight in helping others, and if you could see her, when she is doing something she particularly likes, such a rapt, beautiful expression comes into her eyes! I wonder how it is, some people seem born almost saints. Your mother is one of those—and now I know who Helen always reminded me of—your mother!”

I smiled my appreciation of the delicate compliment.

"There!" she said, a moment after, "I think I have got the stitch, and can do this alone. Won't you give me some music?"

I was so ashamed of my little spindle-legged piano! and told her so.

"It was quite impossible," I said, "to keep it in tune, and the strings would break."

"Dear me, but it's very sweet and silver-toned," she said, coming towards me and it, as I was spreading out my music, "and you would charm music out of anything in the shape of a piano. What a beautiful touch you have! What do you think of my piano?"

"Ah! that is glorious indeed!" I said.

"And yet papa don't like it. He has spoken for a new one, made by a very eminent firm, I forget the name. The one I have was given me, or rather left me by a cousin, who died some three years ago. It was new the year she died — but someway, papa has taken a dislike to it. Of course it will have to be put in a room by itself, and I hate to think of it so utterly neglected. Now, why can't you have it here? It would be quite a favor, and papa don't care what becomes of it, if it is only out of his sight. Of course he

don't like to sell it to any one not in the family. You can dispose of this, unless you set too much store by it."

I listened, it may be imagined, with what a beating heart and quickened pulse. I had been delighted with the soft, rich, mellow tones of the instrument, but had never dreamed of possessing one so valuable, even if I should be enabled to purchase one. Now it was almost thrust into my possession, for here was Gabrielle pleading for me to take care of it.

"And you can keep it forever and a day," she said, "unless I should sometime become poor," she added, laughing, "then I might claim it."

"Then you should come here, and we would share it together," I said, gleefully, with no thought beyond the oddity of the idea.

I thanked her again and again, but insisted upon paying her in some way. "If you could take lessons, now —"

"The very thing!" she exclaimed, clapping her hands. "I never cared much for music, till I heard you and Miss Brock play the other night. Then I was sorry I had wasted my opportunities as I have. Will you really teach me?"

"Indeed I will," I said, and my heart was running over with thankfulness to the dear Father in Heaven, who so bountifully provided for my wants. I had left the matter with Him; I went to Him just as I should have gone to a rich, earthly father, and stated my case, and so left it with Him. How wonderfully and how beautifully He answered me, I leave the reader to see.

Just then mamma came in to set the table, and as I ran to help her, I told her the good news. If Gabrielle was looking at us she must have seen a sort of telegraph despatch lightening out of both our eyes. Hers said,

"I told you he would," and mine said,

"Yes. I know it."

"Harry wants to be wheeled in to take tea with us," said mother. "He has been busy getting himself up for the occasion."

That was pleasant. I was very proud of Harry's beauty and acquirements. And when I wheeled him in, such a picture, in his fresh white linen suit, I noticed that Gabrielle started and flushed. I knew he would astonish her, for hitherto I had said very little about him. His hair, moustache and whiskers had always grown

luxuriantly, and were kept well trimmed, and his sweet simple manners, so thoroughly refined, gave him the appearance of one quite used to society — and yet he had been a recluse all his life. We had honey and tea-biscuit and cookies for tea, with most delicate slices of well-cooked ham, cut cold. I could see that Gabrielle enjoyed the meal, thoroughly. Phil broke out once in rather an unexpected manner, as boys will:

“I guess mother you’ll have to draw on your faith pretty hard,” he said, “if Harry’s going to be a minister.”

“My son!” exclaimed mother, half reprovingly, while Harry flushed.

“Well, he said he was,” said Phil, “didn’t you, Harry?”

“I’ll tell you some other time,” said Harry, without looking at him, and I am sure I could have sent the young marplot from the table. But then it was so like a boy!

Then after tea Harry staid with us, and we had some singing, and when Harry left us, mother and Gabrielle and I sat out on the porch, with the scent of roses and sweet clover and heliotrope coming up from garden and field.

I was so delighted when Gabrielle praised Harry, and we told her what a wonder it seemed that he was recovering, so that the doctor thought he would have the complete use of his limbs, perhaps before a year.

"And does he really think of a profession?" asked Gabrielle.

"He has talked of it — owing so much, as he does to the direct instrumentality of God, he thinks he can do no less than devote the life restored by Him to His service."

"I don't wonder," said Gabrielle, sighing. "How much nobler such a career than the one my dear Jack's brother is engaged in! And yet he thinks he is doing the world service."

"The insolence of unbelief is almost beyond parallel," said mother. "If all Christians had as much faith in their mission, as these people have zeal and audacity in their no-belief, the world would very soon be brought to the knowledge of God."

"Oh, what delicious music!" exclaimed Gabrielle, after a short pause.

Mother listened smilingly. We were accustomed to it, but Gabrielle was in ecstasies. The

Brocks were all playing some weird fantasia for violin, flute and piano.

“Mother, suppose we take Gabrielle over!”
I said.

“Oh, pray do,” said Gabrielle, springing up.





CHAPTER XX.

A HAPPY EVENING.

“ Oh, list the song.”

HERE was a bit of road, some grassy turf, and then a street to cross. This brought us to the pretty little cottage into which I was delighted to escort Gabrielle. There was a shaded light at the piano, at which Cathy and her mother had been standing, and a low table placed beside Mr. Brock's couch, on which stood a little music-stand, and two wax candles. We had waited till the performance was over, and were cordially welcomed. Gabrielle begged them not to lay the instruments aside, as she had come 'specially to hear the music, and asked them if they would be willing to play the same thing again, to which they assented cheerfully.

Mr. Brock lay bolstered up by pillows, flute in hand, his hair, which had grown rather long, curling about his neck. He looked, Gabrielle said, like a spiritualized Beethoven. The little room was very trim and pretty—the evening breeze slowly swayed the white curtains to and fro, and under the influence of the music, we were all disposed to be more or less enraptured.

“What an atmosphere to live in!” cried Gabrielle, “how happy you must be!” Cathy laid aside her violin, and simply said,

“Ah, yes, we are very happy with our music, but we shall not be all together, long; I am to go away soon.”

“But for her own good,” said Mrs. Brock, smiling.

“It should not have been so, if I had been able to work for her,” said Mr. Brock, looking at his wasted white hands, “but here I am—a block—no more a man.”

“Now, my dear,” said his wife, with the tears in her eyes, “you know you were only saying to-day, how thankful you were that the fingers would work,”

“Yes, yes, I was, I am;” and he held the flute

again with a caressing touch, "but then I get very impatient, very unhappy. Come you and sit by me, Mrs. Gregory, and let me tear your faith to pieces. I feel savage, just now."

Mother shook her head, laughing.

"It's no use, Mr. Brock," she said, "your head and my heart are natural foes."

"But I do get the advantage of you; come, now, confess," he said.

"You ask me questions I cannot answer — you bring up isolated texts of Scripture, and I have to go home and hunt up the context, and by the time I get through with that, you are ready with some other perplexing query," answered my mother, in perfect good nature. "I think I must let you severely alone, after this, and not try to convert you to my views."

"Oh, no, no! please," he cried, holding out both hands, "don't you desert me, Mrs. Gregory; for though I don't believe in your doctrines, I believe in you."

"But I am the result of my doctrines," said mother, "so if you believe in me, you must believe in them."

"Ah, you are yourself as nature made you —

and we won't quarrel. My wife loves you like a sister—and her good friends are my good friends. Let doctrines go.”

“Yes, let doctrines go,” said my mother, “but we must not let faith and good works go. We must not forget who is the author of both. I should be a traitor to the noblest aspirations of mankind, if I didn't speak for that—if I did not speak for HIM,” she added, solemnly.

Mr. Brock moved uneasily, and at that moment there was a knock at the door. Cathy answered it, violin in hand, for they were just perparing for some more music, and ushered in — Bony and his sister.

“I told them they might come down here, to-night and we would play for them,” whispered Cathy. “Shall we send them into the other room?”

“No, indeed,” said mother, who overheard her, “give them every possible chance for development. I am sure they will behave very well, while here.”

And they did. A great change was observable in them both. Bony had lost that selfish, stolid look, that had before characterized him, and wore

an almost animated, certainly a cheerful countenance. His Sunday afternoons at our house had cultivated self-respect, and his shoes were carefully tied, while his hair, always beautiful and soft, was combed and curled as if with a laudable ambition to make the best of the few natural advantages he possessed. I had great hope for Bony, who seemed anxious to emerge from the evil conditions that had heretofore kept him bound, hand and foot to sloth, to force, to ignorance. Very often I was made to remember Ernst Brock's assertion that the boy had a good head. He was learning the first principles, readily, and listened with an interest that made the task of teaching pleasant.

His brain not being naturally sluggish, developed, even in the short time we had him under instruction, with a rapidity that was sometimes startling; and kindness, to which he had so long been a stranger, had broken up the egotism which is inherent in nature, and more or less exaggerated in neglected children; so that he began to think of something beside himself.

The girl had always been a daisy of a creature, and possessed a good many attractive qualities.

For music she had a passion, and through that specialty, Cathy, whose charge she was, had had great influence upon her for good. She was neatly dressed, and looked so unconsciously lady-like, that Gabrielle fell in love with her pretty face at once.

When we told her their history, she too was solicitous to enter on the good work, and readily promised to take Cathy's place, when she left for the city.

"So you must come to Garcelon House, where I live," she said to Genie, and was not a little surprised when the girl hastily withdrew her hand, and shook her head.

"I don't want to — I drether not," said the girl, folding a bit of her dress, and growing very red.

"Oh, yes, you will learn to like it, quite as well as here," said Gabrielle, encouragingly, "and I've lots of pictures there to show you."

"She said she'd never go there, agin!" said Bony. "They bad treated her. That woman struck her, and said swear words to me, and we've neither ever been there sence."

"Ah, yes, I comprehend — but *I* was not there

then, and I should like to see any one that I invite to my father's house, ill treated," said Gabrielle, with spirit. "There won't be any danger of that, I assure you."

The girl looking up into the sparkling face, seemed to gather confidence from it.

"I like you," she said, simply.

"And I like you, and I rather think we shall be the best of friends. What a dear little thing it is?" said Gabrielle aside, to me, "and what a charming family!"

By this time the trio had made ready to play again, but scarcely had a bar of music sounded, when the door opened, and Ernst stood before us, flushed and breathing quickly from his walk. Cathy flew into his arms, Mrs. Brock embraced him, and then he knelt down by his father's side, and threw his arms about him like a boy.

"How much better you are, father!" he said, delightedly, "Cathy has been writing me, but I thought I would come and see for myself."

"Ernst, you don't see our Dolly, said Cathy, beamingly.

"Oh, yes, I do," and he shook hands with me, and I introduced him to Gabrielle.

Mother signalled that we should go, but none of them would hear it. Cathy lit the fire in the kitchen, and put the kettle on, Mrs. Brock drew out the table, mother sent Genie into the house for some of our fresh cookies, and these with home-made pretzels, tea and fruit, furnished a comfortable little supper, of which we all partook.

Cathy beckoned me out in the kitchen to show me that Ernst never come empty handed, and sure enough a large basket full of grocery packages stood on the table.

"He is such a glorious brother!" said Cathy. "And he is delighted to think that I am going to have such advantages, and I shall board where he does. That won't seem so much like going away from home, will it?"

"I am very glad for you, Cathy," I said.

"And how good of Miss Gabrielle to take Genie! I felt anxious about her, but that's all over. Now I am going to call Genie to wash the dishes—we must play that sonata."

So Genie and her brother went willingly to work, and Ernst sat with his eyes fixed on his father, as he played, seemingly, with all the ease of his former perfect health.

We were a very happy gathering. Ernst said he should take the midnight train back, as his work was very pressing, and at ten o'clock, a servant came for Miss Gabrielle with the carriage, and mother and I went home together, where we found father fast asleep on the lounge.





CHAPTER XXI.

A LETTER FROM CATHY.

"They have their own reward."

A FEW changes occurred within the following month. Cathy had gone to the city, our room was beautified by the new piano, Bony and his sister were at work at their old employment, and Harry stood upon his feet—tremblingly, strugglingly, yet he stood.

I had several times visited Gabrielle, and made the acquaintance of Miss Jack Leon, and her brother Baron. They had in turn all been to our house, on the occasion of a little farewell party given by us to Cathy Brock. There was something so noble, yet so touchingly sad in the expression of Mr. Baron Leon, that one could but be affected by it, and I found myself wondering

what trouble he could have seen, that had so depressed him. Mother and he became good friends at once. His originality of thought, his pleasant manners and handsome face, were all passports to our favor. My mother avoided all controversial points, but I saw that he was always interested in the simplest things she said.

I was standing near her when he gave her a blush moss-bud. He had been out in the garden with Gabrielle.

“‘A thing of beauty is a joy forever,’ Mrs. Gregory,” he said, “only I don’t agree with the sentiment. All joy is short lived—transient as a drop of dew.”

“But stop,” said mother, as he turned towards Gabrielle. “Who knows but what a moment of joy to us, may vibrate for a million years? To us, here in the flesh, come the transient flash and sparkle, but even that quick delight may be caught up by some invisible spirit of the universe, be communicated to other spheres, and other hearts, until when it has gone its rounds, it has wrought such wonders as we never dreamed of, and travelled, we cannot calculate what distances.”

He smiled and looked a little startled and astonished.

"I confess," he said, "the idea is new to me, and very charmingly put." And then he sighed, and his face grew dark again, "but I don't believe in invisible spirits," he added, and looked down at her, smilingly. He is very tall, and my mother is a little woman.

"Don't you?" she said, pleasantly. "Well, we are not always to blame for our individual convictions."

He evidently expected some other answer, and some such impression forced him to say,

"You won't tolerate me in that fashion when you know me better, Mrs. Gregory. Perhaps you have heard of my lecture over in Ashbury."

"Oh, yes. I have read it in a paper a friend of mine sent me from there," was her reply.

"Horribly mutilated, no doubt," was his response. "Really, Mrs. Gregory, you force me to do homage to your superior Christianity," he said, after a momentary silence.

"My — superior — Christianity," repeated my mother, with a little pause after each word. "It seems to me Christianity can hardly be qualified.

It is so perfectly adapted to the human soul, that wherever it is shrined, it is always, simply, the lessons taught us by Christ."

"Your Master has some uncouth disciples," said Mr. Leon, with the slightest suspicion of a sneer.

"Whoever has truly learned of HIM, has learned good manners," said my mother with a smile.

"Baron, dear, come and sing — do come," said Jack, thrusting her curly head and sparkling face into the group, "I have promised for you."

"How dare you take such a liberty," cried Baron, with simulated heat. "I can't leave Mrs. Gregory."

"Oh, Mrs. Gregory — please tell him to go," pleaded Jack. "I'm afraid he's very naughty and very daring. He is *so* in earnest, you know — and I don't think any one ought to bring such matters up in company. Mrs. Gregory, he's very honest and just as good as gold, in spite of his opinions," she continued, at which we all laughed. "Though don't think I dislike his opinions, for I am his pupil and most devoted servant; but most people, of course, above all Mrs. Gregory, wouldn't agree with him."

“What in the world are you trying to make me out, Jack?” asked her brother, but his cheeks were flushed. “Please don’t defend me till I am attacked. Mrs. Gregory and I were talking like two old friends, and here you pounce upon me like a little bat.”

“I’m not a bat,” said Jack, “and you are the dearest brother in the world, if you will only come and sing, as I have promised,” and she drew him along with her.

Another month passes rapidly away. Cathy has written me several letters about her new place of abode, the conservatory, the pupils, the professors. They are giving her single lessons, not in class, as she expected.

“They seem very willing to help me,” she writes, “and are kind enough to say that my progress is something phenomenal. From a young master, who was very taciturn, I am turned over to Professor Grimsky, a noble, lion-like, old man, with an immense mane of shaggy hair, and eyes so soft and clear, that it makes me happy only to look in them. There are thirty young ladies in singing, forty for the piano, and only me for the violin; consequently I am very

much looked at and wondered over, and commented upon. It is so new that they don't quite know what to make of it. But they are very still when I play, and seem to enjoy it.

"I have the dearest little old landlady in the world; and the next room to Ernst's. Oh, I only wish you were here. You ought to study, you with your fine musical talent—and then the city is so wonderful! Ernst takes me now and then to the libraries and the galleries, and concerts, but he don't have much time. He told me to remember him to Miss Dolly when I wrote—we often talk of you and that sweet mother.

"I know you keep my dear papa company, sometimes. I am so afraid of those moods he gets into; but if anybody can do him good, mentally and spiritually, it is your mother. She never forces her religion upon one, like physic, but gives it as one gives sweet flowers from which all the thorns have been extracted. Oh, how I love your mother!

"Glorious news that, about our poor castaways. I am delighted that they have at last got into pleasant homes. It is a labor of love, but as you say, the reward is immense."

I always felt a little blue after reading Cathy's letters. It was not envy, I hope, because she was enjoying advantages denied to me. But a little reflection, a little of something far better, when I could feel that I left it all with HIM, dissipated the darkness and softened the regret, and I was ready to go on again. Bony, whose uncouth surname had made place for 'Robert,' was so changed, mentally and morally, that he astonished us all. Genie was already a prime favorite with Gabrielle, who had taken her in hand with a will, and not only taught her, but dressed her in neat, nice garments.

"Biddy Bride is just furious about it," she said to me one day, "she seems to mortally hate that poor, innocent child; and much as I think of her, and am grateful for past kindnesses, I feel myself disliking her very much when she pours out the vials of her wrath upon Genie. I am obliged, much against my will to smuggle her into the house, for fear of one of Biddy's terrible fits of passion. And for her part, Genie is mortally afraid of Biddy, so that my labor of love proves a task of no small magnitude, I assure you. But I shall hold on to Genie, for I am getting to love

the little creature — she is so tiny for her age — and I believe she loves me. Papa has also taken a fancy to her, and seems to be interested in her progress, so that but for Mrs. Bride, everything would go on famously.”

I thought one could hardly be blamed for being afraid of Mrs. Bride; I was afraid of her.

At last I am going to the conservatory where Cathy is, to study the science of music. Hitherto, I have been working by rule, but there is something beyond that, a fine interpretation of the spirit and beauty of music, that I long to get at, and I think I shall. It is wonderful, as I said to mother, how all my difficulties are smoothed away, and what I long for with my whole heart, sooner or later comes into my possession.

“Not so wonderful to the Christian believer,” said my mother, “who remembers the promise,

‘Delight thyself in the Lord, and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart.’”

“And I most devoutly thank Him for giving me such a mother,” I said.

“Amen!” responded a gruff, hearty voice, and there stood Dr. Berg, who, finding the door standing open, had dropped in, to see how my brother was getting along.

“So Mr. Harry is up on his feet, I hear—well, well—it took something more than medicine to do that—that is—” and he sat down gravely in a chair near the window.

“A very sad accident has happened,” he added, “and they want you up to Garcelon House, Mrs. Gregory.”

That was so like Doctor Berg!





CHAPTER XXII.

JACK'S FOREBODINGS.

"And flowers of every hue and scent are there."

AND so you think the Gregories are *rather* nice," said Gabrielle, as she caught up a dainty scarf she was arranging on a garden hat. She had been something of an invalid for the past day or two.

"Yes, *very* nice, if you will," said Jack. "Mr. Gregory looks more like a minister, when he is dressed for Sunday, than a common working man."

"He is not common — there is nothing common about him," responded Gabrielle, "he was well educated and comes of a good family, but he was always poor, I suspect. I have heard that an uncle educated him for the profession he studied."

“What! really a profession?”

“Yes, that of an architect, unfortunately. The business nearly ruined his eyes, and he was forced to seek other employment. He has been for years foreman in papa’s mills, but I believe he has a clerkship, now, in some engineering shops.”

“Dear me — well, they *are* very nice people, then — and that oldest son of theirs is as beautiful as a picture. Something or other I said the other night, when we there, seemed to shock him, terribly. I wonder if he has forgotten it? He really appeared to be quite pleased with me, till then, and I had no idea how rude I was, till I thought it over. I wish I *was* nice and delicate like you and Dolly — why can’t I be, I wonder? Don’t you suppose if I had had sisters, it would have made a difference?”

“Very likely,” said Gabrielle, “though I love you just as you are, my dear little Jack.”

“Jack, too — being called Jack,” said the girl, musingly, “I believe that has made me half a boy. Baron has always been my playmate, though such ages older than me — and I have formed my opinions in his mould — not that Baron is ever rude, poor, dear fellow! I expect

that the Gregories consider me hopelessly wicked, perhaps lost."

"Oh, no, no," said Gabrielle, now trying on the finished hat at a mirror. "On the contrary, Mrs. Gregory speaks very highly of you."

"Oh, does she? She is the sweetest woman I ever saw — if I were dying, I should like to hold her hand in mine. It would seem almost like taking her with me. Now, if Helen were only like that!"

"Helen *is* like that," said Gabrielle, "the nearest like Mrs. Gregory of any one I ever saw."

Jack shook her head.

"She never would have treated Baron so. By-the-way, did I tell you that Baron had a letter from her?"

"No!" said Gabrielle, with a look of interest. "I was just thinking of writing to Helen."

"Yes — *I* wouldn't correspond with her, if I were Baron — but then you know men will do such odd things! I coaxed him to let me read it, and slipped it into my pocket. Such a prosaic letter! I never could see a bit of romance in Helen."

"Her whole life is a romance, to me," said Gabrielle, while Jack was hunting in her pocket for the letter.

"Well, I don't know — unless you call poverty and hard work, romantic. I shouldn't, I'm sure," said Jack.

The girls sat in a large octagon room in the tower at the east corner of Garcelon House, that led to a beautiful conservatory, which was the pride of Mr. Garcelon's heart. Every spring and fall certain choice plants which he imported were added to his already numerous collection of flowers, till now the place was one bed of bloom and fragrance. It was the favorite sitting-room, and Mr. Garcelon, before he went to the city, always read his paper there of a morning, while Baron sketched and wrote and read there, as it pleased him. Such an air of peace and quiet as reigned through the house to-day, was almost unprecedented. Mrs. Bride kept her room, the housekeeper was busy weighing sugar and preserving strawberries in another part of the house; Baron was out walking, and Miss Stebbins, Gabrielle's cousin, had gone to the city to visit some other relations.

"I'll read it to you by bits," said Jack, opening the letter.

"Baron thinks her talent for description is quite remarkable. But first comes a sort of — what shall I call it — argument — dry enough; shall I skip that?"

"Not for the world," said Gabrielle, "nothing that Helen writes can be uninteresting."

"Well—I suppose she is answering some notions of his—so here goes."

"I remember what you asked me—but in return, let me ask you something. Measure your experience by these questions. After yielding to doubt, did you feel more satisfied with life and its surroundings? Was it pleasanter to look at a dead blank, a hideous chaos without shape or color, without sun or moonlight, than at the kingly face of Jesus Christ?"

"Did you feel safer in the arms of what you call destiny, which might throw you from chance to chance like a human foot-ball, than in the arms of Him who said with all the authority of a God: *'Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest?'*"

"And here is more," said Jack, turning over the leaf, "but he will have an answer for her."

“Did the comparison of your infidel authors with the character of Christ, give you a more exalted view of their lives and labors — He seeking to build up, they to pull down and destroy. Are their lessons as sublime as His — their motives as pure? Which is noblest, to die for a man, or seek to kill his faith? Say that Christ and the Gospel are myths! Which forms the best ideal for your following, Jesus Christ, or Thomas Paine? — giving to the latter whatever honor his intellect and his statemanship call for.”

“Ah! here is something which I think nicer reading,” said Jack, after a minute’s pause.

“Don’t call my work stupid. We were all children once, you know, and the least and poorest little child is an interesting study to me.

“Our school room is very cheerful — the pupils keep it bright with flowers, and it is in a wing of the house, open on three sides to the air and sunshine.

“One door looks upon an old fashioned garden, where thousands of flowers grow at their own sweet will. The gardener is only allowed to prune here, and keep the weeds out, and the bushes straggle everywhere, turning their blush-

ing buds in all directions, while the scraggly branches of the gnarled old fruit trees, reach to the high windows of the church next door. Another outlook is the lawn, exactly in front, wide and trim, and emerald green, where bees and humming birds flit, lazily, after they have had their feast out in the old garden. This place is always full of cool shade, for the old church roof, and the great chestnuts opposite, and the elms scattered here and there over it, throw long, sweet shadows, while the sunlight dances like a thousand will-o-the-wisps in and out over the cool, short grass.

“The third door shows us near glimpses of evergreen and box hedges, and away beyond, the sloping fields—and beyond them a chain of hills whose coloring would defy the most vivid imagination of the most ambitious of artists to reproduce—so you see I am not so poorly off for pictures.”

“Let me see,” said Jack, turning the pages, musingly, “that’s not so bad, is it?” and she looked up to find Gabrielle sitting quietly, with folded hands, her dark eyes gazing away beyond into depths that only the inner vision penetrated.

"Now I do expect you are back, yourself, at the old school," said Jack, laughing.

"I certainly was," said Gabrielle, with a start. "After all it was a pleasant place, though I was always longing to be out of it, and in the busy world, again. Helen is right — it is a place to be happy in."

"Humdrum!" said Jack, puckering her lips. "Give me a more active life out in the world. Oh, Gabrielle! I wonder if I shall die young? There is so much to be done — so much that I could do! and life is so sweet! When I think of the possible darkness — the — perhaps — nothing, after death, I positively shudder to my soul."

"Leave out the soul," said Gabrielle, impulsively, "say you shudder to your boots. They are at least tangible. What right have you to claim a soul, if you deny immortality?"

"Hush, Gabrielle — you make me think of my waking up, last night. Oh, such an hour! Did you ever feel that you were not alone, when to the senses, you were? How they came crowding about me! What were they? I saw nothing. It made me think of death; a thing that has never troubled me, before. I never saw anybody die.

In all my experience nobody has died out of our house, not even among the servants. Baron told me that there were two between us, two brothers, who died, but it always seemed like a dream to me. Why, how I run on! what is the matter with me? I positively feel cold to my heart."

"Find something in Helen's letter to warm you," said Gabrielle, trying to laugh, for Jack's mood had insensibly affected her.

"Yes — where is it? — oh!"

"‘I have recently won a beautiful little gold medal, for nursing:’ yes, I can imagine that Helen would make a splendid nurse," said Jack, looking up over the top of her letter. "‘Marie, one of the angels of the house, has been ill for weeks, and it was my privilege to take care of her.’ Think of that, Gabrielle, privilege — to stay in a sick room all day! ugh!"

"She died, poor little thing, with her head on my shoulder, and fancied at the last, that I was her — mother — I was so glad of that."

Jack looked up again — made an impatient gesture, and threw the letter as far as she could throw it.

"What's the matter now, Jack?" asked Gabrielle.

"Oh — I'm sick of it all; I'm full of wretched fancies; have been all day. How still the house is! If somebody would play, I would dance and shout, and scream to make a noise. Isn't it horrible!"

"You're homesick!" said Gabrielle.

"I wonder if I am?" answered Jack, with a plaintive quaver in her voice. "Dear old Castle Brook! and I did so want my mother, in the night."

She hid her face in Gabrielle's arm, as the latter passed it about her waist.

"Why, Jack! so bright and sunny always! What has come over you?"

"Mother! mother!" gasped Jack, and sobbed for a moment, unrestrainedly.

"I don't know; I'm just a fool, I suppose," she said as her face emerged to the light again, all wet and rosy. "Pray don't let Baron know — I guess I *am* a little homesick — Baron wanted to start for home, to-morrow, but I said no. I think I'll go, though. I guess we had better go."

"You'll think differently to-morrow, perhaps," said Gabrielle.

"Perhaps, but we must go soon — you have

little Dolly — she is a great deal better than I am — I'm not satisfied, you know," she shook her head, dubiously; "I'm not right — there's something wanting — Oh, I wish I had never known Helen Trevort! It would have been so much better for Baron and me. Oh, goody! there's the lunch bell! Bless the lunch bell! Stop — I'll just bathe my eyes a minute, and come down directly."





CHAPTER XXIII.

NURSE BRIDE'S WARNING.

"The clouds are black in Heaven."

THEY found Mr. Garcelon and Baron in the lunch room, the former in high spirits, the latter participating somewhat in the exhilaration of his host.

"She is a splendid little thing!" he was saying as the girls entered, "taut and trim, and sits the water, what does the poet say — 'like a thing of life!' I leave the poets and poetry to my little girl, here."

"Why, papa! we didn't expect you," said Gabrielle, putting up her lips to be kissed.

"Of course not, but I'm just as welcome, I hope — well, I've done a stroke of business to-day — bought Lyndsay's yacht — the nicest little thing — a beauty! And I'm going to take you all to Havermead to see it. It's only six miles."

“Oh, papa, you forget! *I* can't go,” said Gabrielle, her face quite changed and sad. “Doctor Berg has forbidden me to leave the house for a week.”

“Tut! tut! I'd forgotten that ankle of yours,” said her father. It was only a slight sprain, yet very much depended upon absolute quiet. “Well, I wonder if I must change my plans? It's really my first holiday for weeks.”

“No, indeed, papa — I am not selfish enough for that, I hope. Take Jack and Baron — they will enjoy it I am sure, won't you Jack?”

“Well, I should like it,” said Jack, “I should like uncommonly to catch one more glimpse of the great, grand water, before I go home — but I won't go without you, Gabrielle.”

“Oh, yes, you will,” said Gabrielle, cheerfully, “you must let me see the yacht through your eyes, you know. It wouldn't seem a bit nice for papa and Baron to go without you. As for me, worse things might happen than to have to stay at home for a sprain; I shall get along very nicely, and at four, you know, Genie comes here, so I shall be well rid of all encumbrances, and quite free to hear her lessons. So go!”

“All right,” laughed Jack, quite bright again, and apparently forgetful of her recent nervous fancies, “we’ll just enjoy ourselves in your stead, for I confess a little jaunt will do me good — and you won’t think me selfish?”

“Not in the least,” said Gabrielle, with a kiss, and presently the three were in the carriage at the door, and Hale, the coachman, started the horses. Gabrielle stood at the window, waving her handkerchief, and Jack, laughing, her face a very sunbeam, waved so furiously that she dropped her handkerchief, and the carriage had to be stopped — and then Jack kissed her hand, and that was the last she saw of Jack, though she still stood at the window, looking musingly out.

Later on that afternoon, Gabrielle looked out again. The wind was rising, and the atmosphere assumed a dull, olive-green color, save when at intervals the sun burst forth to shed its pale gold upon the mist, and glorify for one brief moment everything it shone upon.

Genie came punctually at four. Those were happy hours to her, when she could sit alone with Miss Gabrielle in that grand room, where she could both see and smell the beautiful flowers,

and without fear or hesitation repeat her lesson. No wonder the child associated it in her mind with the heaven she sometimes thought of, with a dim appreciation of its glories. So far the two had never been disturbed at their studies. The girl was prettily dressed in a neat gown of some thin plaid material, which Gabrielle had had made out of one of her own dresses, and her blue-gray-eyes danced under the short curls that were tied up by a pink ribbon, by Gabrielle's own hands soon after she had come in.

"I don't feel much like giving a lesson," said Gabrielle, when at last they sat down together, "suppose we just have a good time and let the books go."

"And oh, Miss Gabrielle, will you play just a little for me?" asked Genie.

"That I will, as long as you like. Say, Genie, I wonder if you could learn?"

"Oh, Miss Gabrielle!" cried the girl, and her eyes shone like stars, "I never expect to do that."

"And why not, child, if I have a mind to teach you," said Gabrielle, looking over some old music.

If any one were disposed to be critical in comparing the two faces, and if one were a good judge of beauty, one would hesitate before pronouncing the cultivated, high bred face of Gabrielle, the loveliest of the two, as they sit there together; for Gabrielle has bade Genie come to the piano, and is diligently teaching her the names of the ivory keys. The face of the pauper child, instinct with newly awakened intelligence, is undeniably the most delicately, daintily beautiful; though they do not look unlike sisters.

Gabrielle seems taken with a sudden admiration of the face, for she bends down, with a lingering look, and then quietly but fervently kisses the white forehead.

“Genie,” she says, “don’t let any one but me tell you you are pretty, child.”

“Nobody does say it, ever,” says Genie, quietly. “And I’m not very pretty, I don’t think—it’s you and Miss Jack are handsome—oh, yes, and Miss Dolly—but I’m too little.”

“How old are you, Genie?”

“I guess I’m fifteen. That’s what Grannie Lynch says. She remembers when I was brought there—it was an awful storm.”

“And your mother—how long ago do you remember her?”

“Oh, I don’t remember her at all,” said Genie, with a puzzled little shake of the head. “She died in a day or two—and I was a teeny little mite of a baby.”

“And who took care of you and brought you up, poor child?” asked Gabrielle, a sudden pity bringing the tears to her eyes.

“Oh, everybody—that could, I suppose. I remember being carried about by Boný, before he got hurt. He has always been a kind brother to me—” and a terrified glance aside, and a low cry, ended the sentence.

Gabrielle followed the look, and her eyes fell on a muffled figure standing by the door; the old nurse, pale and gaunt and haggard, regarding the pair with a withering glance, her great blue eyes and the heavy circles around them, making her face cadaverous, almost ghastly.

“What are you doing there?” she cried, pointing to Genie, “that’s no place for a poor-house brat.”

“Genie—don’t you move!” said Gabrielle, the color coming red in her cheeks, and mounting

to her brow. "Now, nurse," she continued, as she pressed the frightened girl back into her seat, "I shall not allow you to insult this poor child. Go back to your room, or you will have a reckoning with papa."

"You talk to me that way, do you? You for whom I have toiled and suffered, and always with a mind for your good and your welfare — that's cruel of you, Gabrielle Garcelon!"

"I don't mean to be cruel, nurse; but this poor child is under my protection while she is here. You must treat my friends with the same civility that I treat yours."

"Mine! I've no friends," said the woman, beginning to cry. "Nobody'll mourn over my coffin when I'm dead and gone — no matter how much I've give for others, with what heart burnings and heart breaking. I'm only a paid servant, after all — and it's hard to give up all your own, and die at last with your lips shut, anyway."

"Nurse, what are you driving at? How strangely you talk!" said Gabrielle, as the woman, apparently forgetful of her first motive for coming down stairs, hobbled to the easy chair,

and sank down upon it, hiding her face in her hands.

“Nothing, child, nothing!” she said, after a long pause, “only I don’t like to see you wasting your fine talents over a girl you know nothing about, and raising them as will sting you after you’ve tended and helped ’em. No good ever comes of such things, I tell you now.”

“Never mind, nurse,” said Gabrielle, “you are only exhausting yourself for nothing—I shall be very careful, and you must have more faith in me. It’s very wrong of you to have such feelings toward the poor and helpless. They’ve never done you any harm.”

“Haven’t they?” and now Mrs. Bride stood up with blazing eyes, and features strongly working. “Wait, Miss Gabrielle, wait awhile; maybe I’ll know when the death stroke comes—and then—”

The door was thrown open by the housekeeper, whose face was very pale.

“Oh, Miss Gabrielle—if you please—will you come out here—I—don’t know what to say—but you won’t break down,” she added, imploringly. “There’s a messenger here—and—and *he* must tell you—I can’t.”

Gabrielle felt her strength deserting her. She dared not, indeed could not move for a moment; the room and the furniture went spinning about her, and she felt a deadly faintness at her heart. Presently she went to the window, and saw a horse trembling and panting yet, under the pressure of his forced ride.

“Oh, nurse, what shall I do?” she murmured.

“I’ll go,” said the woman, lifting herself and tottering forward, but Gabrielle rushed past her, and flew down the stairs, and stood white and trembling before the man who had ridden thither. He was a stout, red-faced man, sitting upon one of the huge leathern chairs in the hall, fillipping his whip-lash through his fingers, but at sight of Gabrielle he stood up and looked at her with pity, hesitating to speak.

“You have brought me bad news; what is it? Please tell me quickly!” said Gabrielle grasping at the edge of the heavy oaken table. “My father! has anything happened to him?—or to Mr. Leon—or—or Jack?” she asked, with quivering lips.

“All of ’em, ma’am, leastways, the yacht was upshot by a sudden squall, and none of ’em bein’

sailors, consequence was they didn't know how to manage. Two of 'em come to shore, Miss, but—" he bent his eyes to the ground, unwilling to see the anguish of her face.

"Which two?" she asked, with a nervous motion of the hands.

"The young gentleman and the young lady, Miss."

"And my father!" cried the girl wildly, "my father!"

"Well, Miss," said the man, more and more reluctantly, "they couldn't find him. They took the young lady into the White Hen, a public house near by, to bring her too, and it was my orders to ride here at top speed, and have a doctor sent for, and beds got ready, and hot water and blankets and them things, Miss."

"But my father! my father!" moaned Gabrielle.

"They mout a' found him, you know," said the man, "there was boats out, for a mile or more round. The young man as swum to shore with the young lady, Miss, offered hundreds, if they'd go and find him—and likely as not they will," he added. "People, you know, is brought to,

often, after bein' hours in water. They'll try everything they can, Miss."

"Oh, this is terrible!" cried Gabrielle, "only a few short hours ago — Mrs. Yorkings," she exclaimed, as the housekeeper came in sight. "have plenty of hot water — and the beds and flannels ready — I'm sure I don't know what to do," and she walked the floor wringing her hands.

"I guess, Miss, that's the carriage," said the man, as the sound of wheels and horses feet drew near.

"Send somebody for Dr. Berg, immediately," said Gabrielle, then with a sinking heart, and trembling in every limb, she threw open the door, and waited.

The first person who got out of the carriage, was Dr. Berg, himself. They had met him on the way. Then came a gentleman, into whose arms was handed a strange, limp burden, well wrapped up, then Baron himself descended and followed, almost staggering, while death could not have altered his face.

"Oh, Baron! Baron!" cried Gabrielle, in an agony, "where is my father?"

He, gazing at her, as at something a great distance off, replied mechanically, "they will bring him, soon," and walked on, following the man who carried Jack. Gabrielle looked vaguely about her, saw the servants coming up and down stairs, heard doors shut and open in the distance — then everything grew dark about her, and she remembered nothing more.





CHAPTER XXVI.

BARON'S UNBELIEF.

"Of pleasure changed to weakness"

HOOOR little Genie had gone home from the hushed house, sobbing all the way. Gabrielle had just lifted herself from the sofa where they had laid her when she fainted, and the water with which they had bathed her head was still streaming down her face. There was no voice to be heard anywhere, for though Baron was walking back and forth with a singularly unsteady motion at the end of the room, his footsteps were muffled by the thick carpet.

"Oh, Baron!" cried Gabrielle, piteously.

He came rapidly toward the lounge.

"How you must have suffered!" she said, looking wanly up into his eyes, forgetting her

own trouble in pity for his altered face. "Has— have they brought papa home, yet?"

"Not yet!" he said gloomily.

"Will they—ever, do you suppose?" she asked, earnestly.

"I hope so—I am looking for it."

"And Jack—is she comfortable? can I see her?"

"Good God!" he exclaimed, abruptly, "is it possible you don't know?"

"Know—what?" she faltered.

"That Jack is dead!"

With one long, heart-rendering cry, Gabrielle threw herself upon the couch, and buried her face in her hands, shuddering from head to foot.

"Oh, Baron, I can't bear it—indeed it is too much," she sobbed. "Why must all this calamity fall upon us, when we were least prepared for it? I wish I had gone, now, and died with poor Jack and papa."

And indeed for the time, she did heartily wish it. Presently she sat up, looking like a drenched lily, and her eyes followed Baron's movements as he commenced his monotonous walk.

"Baron!" the called, softly.

He came again towards her.

"If I could only see Dolly's mother, I think I should feel better," she whispered, falteringly.

"You will see her soon. Doctor Berg has gone there — said he would call on his way," the door bell tinkled faintly, "and there I suppose she is. I don't care to see her," and he turned to go.

"Baron — don't go!" cried Gabrielle, holding forth her hands, "don't go: I am frightened."

He came back again, and was standing by the foot of the lounge when Mrs. Gregory entered. Not a word did she utter, only went forward, and folded poor Gabrielle to her bosom holding her in a long, silent embrace.

Baron turned his head away.

He bit his lip, and the tears came to his eyes. Jack had loved her; why did he feel a repugnance toward her presence just now?

He resumed his walk. The servant came in and lighted the gas, in a broad flare — when he went out, Baron turned it down. He heard Gabrielle and Mrs. Gregory, talking together, earnestly, Gabrielle sobbing as she spoke, in answer to the low questions.

“He doth not willingly afflict, my dear, not willingly,” came to his ear, and his cheeks and brow flushed.

“You will say, I suppose, that your God, has brought this affliction upon us,” he cried, angrily.

“He holds the winds and the waves in His hand,” she said, quietly.

“And changes them, and hurls them in his anger upon a poor inoffensive girl — and drowns her for His glory! I’ll believe in no such God.”

“No, my friend, not in the state you are in now — nothing could make you believe.”

“Yes, there is one thing!” he said, almost fiercely, “one thing!”

“And what is that?”

“Let God give me back my little sister, and I will believe in Him. She was all I had — everything has been stripped from me, now; it is too cruel! too cruel!” He lifted his hands clenched and rigid above his head, then dropped them helplessly, and turned away murmuring, brokenly,

“My little Jack! my little girl!”

“Can you not leave her in His hands,” asked the gentle woman.

“No! no; I want her—I needed her. Oh, God, if there be a God, give me back my sister! I am unmanned, I am totally unmanned,” he murmured, moving on, staggeringly. “And there is the mother—she knows it by this time—and my poor old father!—they lived in that girl. Jack was their idol.”

“But is it not cause for thanksgiving, that one of their children is spared to them?” asked Mrs. Gregory, all the time holding and smoothing, and softly patting Gabrielle’s hands.

“A questionable mercy,” he answered, in the old spirit, and turning abruptly, he left the room.

“And now, my dear,” said Mrs. Gregory to Gabrielle, “I am going to stay here all night, and watch and wait for tidings. You must go to bed.”

“No, no, no! I cannot,” and the girl fell back.

“My dear, are you not willing to do your mother’s commands!”

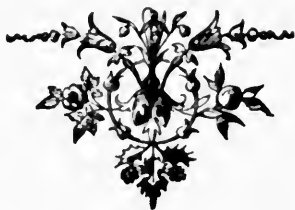
That broke her down.

“I will do whatever you say,” she replied, meekly rising, “only stay by me.”

“I have come for that very purpose,” was the quiet response. “Dolly sent her love—I need not say that she is in deep sympathy—indeed all

of us suffer for and with you. There," holding Gabrielle close, "now, you can go, nicely, and if you do not sleep, you can at least get a little rest."

Poor Gabrielle! in spite of all her anguish, her eyes were heavy with sleep and sorrow. In a few minutes the regular breathing told that she slept.





CHAPTER XXV.

ALMOST A MIRACLE.

"The spirit has its energies sustained."

AS soon as she was quite sure that Gabrielle would not miss her, Mrs. Gregory rang for the housekeeper, and requested to be taken to the room where Jack was lying.

"Can I see her quite alone?" she asked.

"Certainly: two of the girls are sitting up, but they'll be very glad to go," was the response. "Oh, madam, isn't it awful? We're all of us almost shocked out of our senses — Mr. Garcelon gone — lying in the water, there, and this dear young lady! Oh, ma'am, I shall never get over it, I believe."

This she said as they were going up stairs and along the passage. The two girls started as the

door was opened, and were quite glad to be dismissed even for a brief time. The body lay in bed, covered with a long linen sheet. Reverently Mrs. Gregory turned down the top, and there, as in a peaceful sleep, composed and smiling, was poor little "mad-cap-Jack," as her father called her. Nothing to remind one of death, except the faint dark lines under and around the eyes, but even those were not marked. Mrs. Gregory lifted the nerveless hand, there was as yet nothing rigid about its outlines: it moved to her touch, and she bent down closely and scanned the pretty, bright face, and the lips that seemed ready to speak.

"Everything has been done, I suppose," she said, looking up to the housekeeper.

"Everything—twice—where they brought her in, and here. We've been kept busy for hours."

"And yet," murmured Mrs. Gregory, "I had a brother who was drowned and given up for dead, after everything had apparently been done in vain. He is living now. Shall I tell you," she added, cautiously, after a second of silence, "I don't believe this child is dead!"

"Good heavens, madam!" cried her listener,

with vehemence, pressing both hands over her chest, as if to keep her astonishment down.

“And if you will try to have a little faith in what I say—and will help me—only we two—there can be no possible harm in our trying to resuscitate her.”

“Oh, madam! to touch a corpse!” cried the housekeeper.

“I don’t think it *is* a corpse,” said Mrs. Gregory, sententiously; “but if you have any dread of it—who can I depend on to help me?”

“I’ll not be so silly,” said the housekeeper, the color coming slowly into her face; “if you really think she mayn’t be dead, why, I’ll try and help you. The pretty child can’t hurt us—dear little one! She was so bright and happy.”

“Very well, we won’t waste words. I see she has not been washed and dressed yet, and fortunately there *is* a fire-place here.”

“Yes’m, and a crane, and everything handy. This was our sick room.”

“Then have a fire built here, immediately, and have a kettle and boiling water brought up. Get out some blankets, and bring up a little brandy, yourself. Hurry, please, and keep your own counsel.”

The housekeeper left the room, and Mrs. Gregory locked the door and fell on her knees beside the sweet, inanimate body. Words there were none — not even the lips denoted that a soul was wrestling with God — only the clasped hands, the pale inspired face and closed eyes, the outward fervor visible almost as a halo permeating the whole frame, told that the spirit in communion with Góð was hanging upon HIS promise.

It was not long before all things were arranged. Together the two worked, unaided, into the small hours of the morning. The body was enveloped in hot blankets, respiration simulated —

“I never saw such a woman,” the housekeeper was wont to say, in dwelling upon that eventful night, “she never stopped for a minute, she never wearied — she prayed — she breathed in her nostrils, in her mouth — she poured down stimulants, long after I had given up in despair, and once when she looked round at me — her hair had fallen down and her eyes shone under it like stars, and her glance went through and through me, like a shock of lightning.

“‘Come here!’ she said, and oh, her face! — ‘I think I feel her heart beating!’

“Well, that was a moment I assure you was worth living for a good long life, to see. I went there; she took my hand and pressed it on the breast. And God help us all, there was a motion — now and then.

“ ‘We mustn’t give up now,’ she said, and she looked kind o’ wild like and breathed short, like one almost wore out — and so she was.

“We didn’t give up — we worked harder than before — and just as the blessed clock struck three, that child opened her eyes!

“Well, I can’t tell you how I felt then. I could a-screamed, and indeed I held both hands tight over my mouth. To think that all the household was asleep, and we there, watching a soul come back! — they weeping and moaning even in their dreams for their dead, and we rejoicing over our living!”

At this point of the story, the tears were streaming down the woman’s cheeks, no matter how often she told it; and no wonder.

Yes, the eyes did open, the heart did beat, faintly, oh! so faintly at first. Mrs. Gregory, her brow damp, her locks all wet with the almost unprecedented exertions she had made, beckoned the housekeeper to put up her hair, and kept her

glance intently on Jack's face, holding the spoon to her lips. At last the breathing became regular — the face contorted with slight spasms, and almost inaudible groans, proved awakening consciousness.

"I suffer!" were the first words she said, with an effort that was painful to witness.

"It will be over, soon, darling; you are growing better every moment."

"Who is it?"

"Dolly's mother, dear."

"Oh, yes—I—I thought I knew the voice. I—am a little better, though I can't quite see."

"Never mind—that will all come right, in time."

"What is it? what has happened? Oh, I remember—the boat!—the wind! the frightful wind! Where is my brother Baron?"

"Safe in the house, dear, and asleep, I hope."

"He caught hold of me," she murmured, after a brief silence. "Did he swim with me to the shore?"

"He kept you up till a boat rescued you—but I wouldn't dwell upon the matter, now that you are safe."

"No—I am very, very tired. Where am I?"

“At home, in Gabrielle’s house.”

“Dear, dear Gabrielle! I am so glad she staid at home — her father would have missed her so.”

Evidently she had forgotten the fact that Mr. Garcelon was with them, for she said nothing further about him, and presently sank into a light slumber.

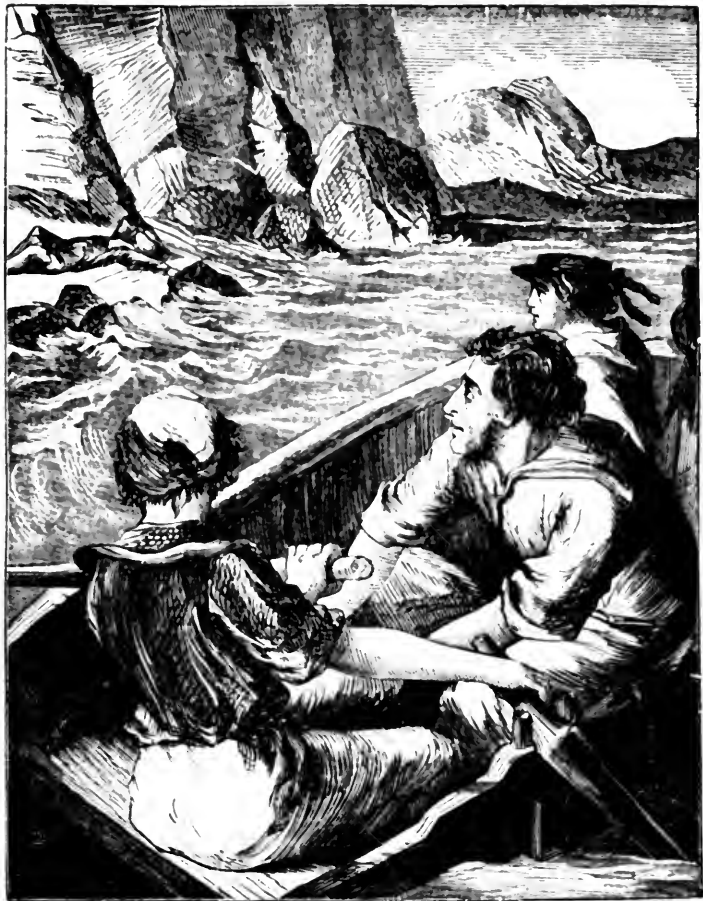
“A meracle! as much a meracle as ever was!” muttered the housekeeper, wiping her eyes.

“God’s great mercy,” sighed Mrs. Gregory, and then her strength seemed to desert her. She threw herself down by the sleeping girl, and for a little time availed herself of the services of the housekeeper, who bathed her head and rubbed her hands, and brought back her fast failing consciousness.

“You think we had better say nothing about it, to-night?” said the housekeeper, as she sat down by the side of the bed.

“It’s so near morning, now — and I am so thoroughly weary; indeed we both are in need of sleep — it will be better to wait — good news will keep, you know — so you had best lock the door, and take the lounge yourself. She is sleeping sweetly, now — and the danger is all past, thank God!”





The Discovery.



CHAPTER XXVI.

CLAIMING THE PROMISE.

"In truth's eternal sunbeams."

WITH the early morning came a telegram. Mr. Garcelon's body had been found nearly a mile beyond the place where the yacht was upset. He had been in the water all night, and life was of course entirely extinct.

Gabrielle got the news first. She had slept uneasily, her dreams teeming with images of terror. Through the kind thoughtfulness of Mrs. Gregory, one of the girls, dismissed from the service of watching Jack's supposed dead body, was sent into her room, and she felt the comfort of having some one to speak to, through the dreary, sleepless watches of the night.

Gabrielle had never seen much of her father.

It was only through the influence he had on her life, that she felt bound to him. Generally he was a very reticent man, and devoted to money getting. He was as fond of his daughter as his nature permitted, and then in the business world he was a man of mark—his word was as good as his bond—and perhaps, unconsciously, Gabrielle shared the common failing of valuing one according to the measure of his success. Be that as it may—the knowledge that she was fatherless, jarred every chord of her heart, and the terror of the death which struck a man in the full flush of health and success, and in possession of all his faculties, out of existence at one fell blow, gave to her sorrow an added horror.

As yet she knew nothing of the wonderful thing that had happened. Neither did Baron, who, when he awakened, felt like a man bound hand and foot in the darkness of some cell of torture. He rose before it was quite light, and dressed, because he could do nothing else, and to lie and think would be unendurable. At five, the dawning day brightened the tops of the trees and the eastern sky began to flush. Baron prepared to go out, and try the effect of a long walk,

in the fresh morning air. It seemed to him that nerves and blood and heart were all stagnant within him, and he must do something to rouse himself from this death-like torpor. .

A knock at his door.

"Mr. Leon, are you awake?" said a soft voice.

He opened the door. Mrs. Gregory stood there, a curious light in her face, and her eyes transfixed him, they were so luminous, so speaking with mingled love and delight.

"Mr. Leon, I have good news for you," she said, quietly.

"Are my father and mother here, so early?" he asked.

"No—but One is here who calls you. Do you remember what you said last night that if God would give you back your sister, you would believe in him?"

"I do," he replied, gravely, and he seemed to shrink from his tall stature, and the color in his face went and came.

"Very well—God has given you back your sister. Come and see."

Like one in a dream, only his chest rose and fell, violently, he followed her. He saw her open

the door of that room where he had kissed his dead sister. He heard her say, as he paused on the threshold, awe-struck,

“Jack, Baron is coming; would you like to see him?” heard her reply,

“Yes indeed, dear, dear Baron!” and he rushed into the room, awe-struck and overpowered, and white as any ghost. He had only time to see Mrs. Gregory put her finger to her lip, and he was half lying on the bed, his sister’s arms about him, and he lifting her from the pillow and straining her to his bosom, with inward sobs that almost burst his heart.

Presently he felt his hand taken, and looked up to see Mrs. Gregory, tears in her eyes, but evidently trying to restrain him.

“Before this solemn evidence,” she whispered, “and before God, I hold you to your promise.” He looked at her bewilderingly.

“You may — you may!” he said, still feeling and speaking like a man in a dream, “but — how can I reconcile this wonderful vision with what I saw and heard yesterday? It is beyond belief.”

“You must go, now — your sister is very weak,” said Mrs. Gregory, “and needs much rest — by-and-by I will tell you.”

Later in the day, he learned all the facts, from the voluble tongue of the housekeeper. With what emotions he rushed from the house to intercept his parents and gladden their sorrowing hearts, I leave the reader to judge.

Mr. Garcelon was brought home, and the funeral took place on the second day, with much state and ceremony.

The fact of Jack's restoration was the one beam of sunshine that penetrated the darkness of sorrow and death. All the town was talking about it, and the devotion and heroism of Dolly's mother, were lauded to the skies.

Jack still continued weak and ill, in spite of the daily visits of Dr. Berg, and the various delicate nourishments sent up to the sick room by the kind neighbors.

"I think," she said, one day, "if I could only see Helen, and hear her sweet voice, I should get well sooner."

"Then Helen shall come," said Baron, with a wildly beating heart. "I will write her, myself."

And Helen came to Garcelon House, more beautiful, more spiritual than ever; and Jack sat

day after day, her wasted hand in hers, and listened and loved and believed. Baron was very silent during those days. He seemed constantly communing with himself. Arrangements had been made that as soon as Jack should be able to be moved, the family was to return to Castle Brook. They had delayed much on Gabrielle's account, the poor girl pleading her loneliness, when they should desert her, and yet affirming her anxiety to remain at Garcelon House for the present.

One day Helen and Baron were sitting together at dusk. Gabrielle was with Jack in her room, and though the gas was lighted, it was burning very low. The conversation turned on Dolly's mother, and Baron with much agitation related the events of that never to be forgotten night.

"What a wonderful woman! and how much you owe to her, under God!" said Helen.

"Yes. I made her that promise in full faith — yet with a man of my temperament, it takes time and research to settle down permanently upon a different belief. I think when I stood by that bed with Jack in my arms, I did put up, involuntarily, something like a prayer — and since then,

I have tried more than once to pray. Meantime, I am reading the Scriptures, thoroughly, and intend to study them in the original."

"Oh, how delightful! I have always longed to do that," said Helen.

"You have also done more than you think, perhaps. Do you remember that memorable Sunday? It was solely on your account that we went to church—I had not been inside the old place for ten years, and such memories as it stirred within my bosom! There was the old man who had shown so much solicitude, so much hope and faith in me, when I was what he called a promising boy. Perhaps they crammed me with too many texts, but I give them the credit of doing it for my good as well as to show off my smartness. Well, I sat there, thinking of all I had had to unlearn—and what struggles it had cost me. To be sure I had had no very profound religious convictions, but then it had been a hard fight to convince myself—as ultimately I did—that physiology was a better guide than religion, and that the body was all—that there was nothing to live in the hereafter. However, I will not talk of that to you—for I see it distresses you."

Helen had turned her face away; now she looked at him again, pale, but smiling.

"Well, little as you might imagine it," he continued, "I carried home a sentence out of that sermon, that I never shall forget. It was this:

'So no merely human progress, with an upward tendency, seeking to supersede and overreach God's plan, can ever succeed.'"

"I have carried that to rest with me. I have waked up with it singing in my ears. I have tried to forget it, but there is something magnetic about it,—it has confounded and troubled me. But I hope now I shall soon lay the ghost of that accuser.

"And, Helen, when I see my way clear to renounce all my doubts—for something tells me I shall do so—even in the face of the strange training I have given myself, then—I will not ask you, before—then will you consent to become something yet dearer than friend or sister."

And her answer was very sweet.

"I have such faith in your integrity of purpose and love for the truth, that I can safely promise you without waiting."



And her Answer was very sweet.





CHAPTER XXVII.

DOLLY'S NARRATIVE ENDED.

"Our souls have wings."

IT devolves on me, it seems, to finish the remaining pages of this little book, and I can assure the reader that it is a labor of love.

Cathy Brock is already giving concerts in the large cities, and has been enabled to purchase the little cottage in which they have lived so long and happily, for her parents, who think, and with good reason, that there never was such a dear, affectionate girl. Mr. Brock has a wonderful chair, in which he can drive himself out, having the complete use of his hands, and in which, singular to relate, he goes to church every pleasant Sunday. He is contemplating taking

a class, and says, cheerfully, that he is only waiting to finish his theological studies. He is much brighter and happier in his enforced invalidism, his wife says, than he ever was in the best days of his health. The change has come about so gradually, that nobody is surprised. It seems like a natural result of his wife's faith and care, and his own seclusion from the world in which he has been able to test the power of Christianity to make a man's life useful and happy, in spite of surrounding circumstances.

Gabrielle is very busy, and apparently very happy. Both Genie and Bony — now Robert Garcelon, are at Garcelon House, since the death of Mrs. Bride. They are there not as the adopted, but as the real brother and sister of Gabrielle, the children of her father and her mother. The story that she told me, sounds so much like a romance, an invention of the brain or pen, that I should shrink from placing it here — only I know it to be true.

After Mr. Garcelon's death, Mrs. Bride grew rapidly worse, and when the doctor had pronounced that her end was near, she sent for Gabrielle, and made a confession.

I will endeavor to give the fact in Gabrielle's own language.

“Por old nurse! she had grown very pinched and wan, and quite gentle in her manner. She said she had not long to live, and as her old master was gone, she wished to make restitution as far as possible. Then she told me of poor mamma's habits, and how at one time, she set fire to the cradle in which her own — Mrs. Bride's — little girl, an infant not quite two years old was lying asleep. The child was burned to death, and her poor mother frantic and wild with grief, declared her intention of prosecuting the luckless woman, and disgracing the family. But at last a compromise was effected. I was nearly the age of her little Bessy, and I was given in her charge, to care for and consider as her own. This was not the cruel arrangement it might seem, for my own poor mother was not capable through her intemperate habits, contracted, I am sorry to say, at my father's table, of caring for either of her children. Nurse was always to have a home with my father, well furnished rooms, and a servant. Consequently she came to look upon me as her sole chargé, and when my unfortunate mother

left the house, taking with her, her oldest child, a boy, Mrs. Bride claimed more privileges than ever. My father, for the sake of peace, granted all her wishes. He was very fond of me, and through his partial kindness, she managed to have her own way, and rule the house.

“That was before we came here.

“When my father built Garcelon House, and the mills, and took Mrs. Bride with her husband and her charge out here, my mother had been missing twelve or fourteen months. Every effort was put forth to discover her whereabouts, but she thoroughly eluded pursuit. It is now known that she was with a cousin, who for the sake of a few diamonds she carried with her, kept her concealed, but eventually turned her away. Nurse Bride, on hearing of the woman found in the great storm, in destitute circumstances, and suspecting it might be her, went there to investigate. Sure enough, it was my poor mother, but she was then dying, and could recognize no one. From that time until the day on which the fear of death led her to confess, my nurse never betrayed her knowledge of this fact. It was very heartless, very cruel, for how much misery and sorrow

might have been prevented, had these poor children come sooner to their rights. But she seems to have hated my mother, and that hate included all but my father and myself, so that the motherless waifs were left to the tender mercies of the pitiless world. My father never knew that another child was born to him, though he made provision in his will for his son and his wife, should they ever be found.

“This is the secret of nurse Bride’s undying hostility towards these children, and for which I think she was sorry at the last. Dear little Genie! it is so good to have a sister of one’s very own! she shall share as fully in the benefits of my father’s will, as I do.”

And so Genie and Robert are at Garcelon House, the distillery business is broken up, and Robert is to be sent to school and made a man of—a good one he will make, I warrant.

Gabrielle is very proud of her little sister, and as gentle and loving as a saint toward her new brother, who would scarcely be known for the same boy in his fine, well fitting clothes.

And now for the people at Castle Brook. We are all invited to Baron’s wedding, which takes

place in the course of the next month. Jack is slowly getting on, though it is feared that she will never regain her former robust health. Still I understand that she is quite as merry, vivacious and original as formerly, for which I am devoutly thankful. Mamma and I do not believe in a religion that makes long faces. They are all very busy getting up the bridal outfit, and the General and his wife say they had rather take Helen for a daughter, in her poverty, than any heiress who might be found, and it is presumable that there are many in the circle of their acquaintanceship.

About ourselves.

Naturally we should come last. Harry is well and almost robust in health, not quite. Dr. Berg says we should not look for that for years to come. It is enough that we have him in our midst, bright, intelligent and active. General Leon, who cannot do enough to testify his gratitude toward my mother, has entrusted papa with an agency that is very profitable, and which also gives him the desire of his heart, which is to travel. He is to go abroad in a few weeks, and Harry is to accompany him. I am no longer at the Conservatory, but have plenty of pupils of

my own, and all the leisure that is good for me. Cathy wrote me the other day that she had a presentiment that I was to be her sister. I don't know; that is looking quite too far ahead, for me.

Meantime I am very happy with all my surroundings. Surely God has given us abundant blessings, and I still assert, from my own individual experience—and I think I have a right to assert, that in all the world **THERE IS NO MOTHER LIKE MINE.**





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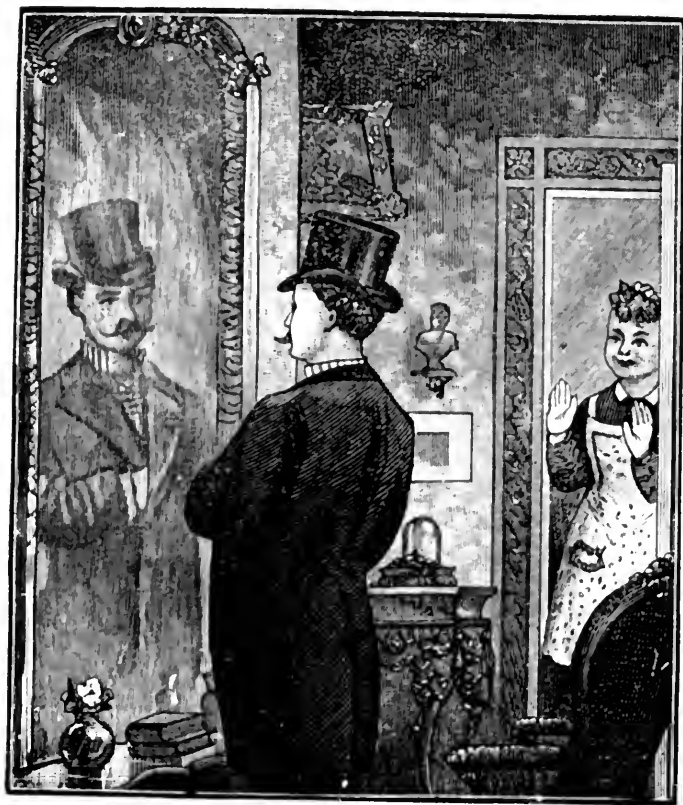


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